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"The Ghosts of Waller Creek": An Exploration of the Use of Applied Theatre and Site-Specific Performance as Methods for Public Participation in a City Planning Process

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"The Ghosts of Waller Creek": An Exploration of the Use of Applied Theatre and Site-Specific Performance as Methods for Public Participation in a City Planning Process

by

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Dedication

This document is dedicated to my family and to the past, present, and future ghosts of Waller Creek.

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Abstract

"The Ghosts of Waller Creek": An Exploration of the Use of Applied Theatre and Site-Specific Performance as Methods for Public Participation in a City Planning Process

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

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In this thesis, I explore applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops as methods for public participation in city planning. "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program worked to foster interest in and facilitate dialogue around the redevelopment of an abandoned urban creek area in Austin, TX. I explore three guiding questions: How does an applied theatre practitioner foster collaboration with non-theatre artists on a creative project that achieves common goals? How can applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops and events foster place attachment and engage citizens in city planning? How does an applied theatre practitioner translate participatory, applied theatre workshops into an artifact that is useful to city planners? Using reflective practitioner research processes and qualitative coding methods, I examine these questions through an analysis of surveys, interviews, performances, discussions, field notes, and observations.

I first explore the role that goals, communication, and reflection played in my partnership with an urban designer. I then use place attachment theory to examine how the workshops and events shifted participants' interest in, and engagement with, Waller Creek and city planning. Next, I investigate how performative artifacts such as audio maps and interactive performances can communicate participants' opinions about Waller Creek to city planners and to the general public. Finally I discuss how the project situates in the field of arts-based civic dialogue and address guidelines for future projects. This thesis invites applied theatre practitioners to consider how their work can contribute to arts-based civic dialogue in their own communities.

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-Workshop participant

INTRODUCTION

Think for a moment about a place that is special to you. Think about the way it looks and smells, the dear ones you associate with it, and the way you feel when you're there. When you think of that place, do you see its ghosts? When I think of my grandparents' farm in Kansas, I don't see a grey decaying barn. I don't see the once-white farmhouse sinking slowly into its foundation or the abandoned tool shed. I don't see the piles of garage sale items purchased obsessively by my aging grandmother. I don't see the packed boxes or the missing toys. I see ghosts.

I see the ghost of my grandmother, very much alive and feisty as always, long grey hair wrapped in a tight turban on top of her head. She is at the long dining room table covered with an orange plastic tablecloth, serving buckwheat pancakes and passing the plastic honey bear. I hear Rusty, the mutt, barking and racing around the yard, scattering the chickens. I see my cousins, David and Andy, as young boys, peering out the window on the second floor of the barn, yelling, "Hey, get up here!" I feel my feet sink into the hay on the barn floor as mice scurry away, and my little arms and leg stretch up to meet each tall wooden rung on the ladder. Finally up top, I feel my heart pound as I look at the ground below. When I think of this farm, now owned by strangers, this is what I see, hear, and feel. For me, these are its ghosts.

Most of us have infinite numbers of ghosts, or site-specific memories, in infinite places. Even new places can remind us of old ghosts—for example, why do all elementary schools smell the same? Memories help us attach emotionally to the places and spaces in our lives. But what if we don't see any ghosts at a certain site? Can we still care about it? What if we want others to care about a place that is unfamiliar to them? Can we help facilitate the creation of ghosts? As an applied theatre practitioner, I am interested in how theatre and storytelling can aid us in this effort and serve as tools for education, civic engagement, and social change around issues of places and spaces that we don't necessarily associate with site-specific memories.

These questions and more drew me to the rapidly developing field of applied theatre, and to graduate study at The University of Texas at Austin. For my practical thesis research, I co-created and piloted an applied theatre program entitled "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" with urban designer and University of Texas Department of Architecture PhD student Lynn Osgood. Osgood acted as co-facilitator, storyteller of Waller Creek's history, and representative of the City of Austin Waller Creek Citizen's Advisory committee. This program's main goal was to explore applied theatre and site-specific performance events as methods for education around, and public participation in, a city planning process for Waller Creek. This area has historically been the site of urban decay, homeless encampments, and neglect. The City of Austin is currently planning the redevelopment of the area. By examining its ghosts—its past, present, and future civic issues, we hoped to help people in Austin connect to Waller Creek and participate in related city planning activities.

To this end, Osgood and I partnered to conduct four workshops: two with UT Austin art and design students who were not familiar with Waller Creek, one with UT Austin art and design students who were mapping the creek as part of a semester-long

class, and one with a community-based organization called Austin Community Living. We held most of each three to four hour workshop outdoors along Waller Creek and focused on two main goals: 1) to facilitate dialogue with participants about the history and the current state of the creek, and 2) to foster attachment to the creek as well as future participation in city planning activities and decisions regarding the creek.

Each workshop included applied drama and theatre elements such as story circles, high-energy, community-building games, and movement and performance vocabulary. Osgood shared information and answered questions about the creek's history, the Waller Creek Tunnel Project, and the Waller Creek Master Plan, the City of Austin's proposed plan for redeveloping the area. The workshops culminated in a process in which the participants collaboratively created short performance pieces in and around the creek using prompts related to their own memories of water and the history of the creek, while imagining future narratives for the creek. In addition to the workshops, "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program also included the creation and performance of a more formal, 20-minute devised performance event. I created this piece with UT Austin junior design students who were already studying the creek for a class and had participated in our third workshop. The devised piece offered an interactive, site-specific performance that explored the past, present, and future of the creek and its city planning issues. The end of each workshop, as well as the performance, included a 20-40 minute discussion. Osgood and I asked participants to reflect on their workshop experience and evaluate their future interest and role in city planning at Waller Creek.

I frame the discussion of this project using the background of public participation in city planning, and the Waller Creek Master Plan, as well as theories of critical pedagogy, applied theatre, place attachment, art for civic dialogue, and site-specific performance. These theories underpin the goals of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek"

program and offer insight into the following research questions that guided my study of this applied theatre project: How does an applied theatre practitioner foster collaboration with non-theatre artists on a creative project that achieves common goals? How can applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops and events be used as methods for fostering place attachment and engaging citizens in a city planning process? How does an applied theatre practitioner translate participatory, applied theatre workshops into an artifact that can be useful to city planners?

METHODOLOGY

The main goal of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" study is to explore how applied theatre and site-specific performance can be used to foster public participation in the city planning process at Waller Creek. Using reflective practitioner research processes and qualitative coding methods, I examine my guiding questions in this project through an analysis of pre- and post-workshop surveys, interviews, video-recordings of performances and discussions, reflective field notes, and observations. I analyze my collaboration with Osgood to determine a framework for fostering collaboration with non-theatre artist partners. I look for performance choices and comments made in discussions specifically related to shifts in participants' attachment to and civic engagement with Waller Creek and city planning after the performance workshops and events. With feedback from city planners/designers, as well as community and student workshop participants, I explore ideas for moving from participatory theatre workshops and dialogue towards an artifact that could prove useful to city planners.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Brief History of Public Participation in City Planning

The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) defines citizenship as "the act of contributing to public life and participating in solving public problems" ("NCDD Resource Center - Quick Reference Glossary"). According to city planning scholar Sonja Lòpez, public participation by citizens in city planning processes emerged in the late 1960s in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Moment, during which "the protest activities of the time reawakened local participatory democracy in all aspects of city life" (55). She adds that this changed the landscape of planning:

> People began to demand that planning be conducted 'with' or 'by' the people instead of 'for' the common interest or public good. Consequently, today's planners include some sort of public involvement element when planning either as a result of federal or state mandate, or because citizen participation is often perceived to be a 'required' element of planning. (Lòpez 55-56)

These state or federally-mandated public involvement methods include town hall meetings, surveys, and focus groups. After the 1960s, planning theory shifted away from creating physical planning documents and focused more on following the procedural requirements of the planning process. Lòpez notes that critics of today's methods argue for a balance between process and substance: "Without the plan as the foundation, citizen participation tends to be reactionary and the resulting planning products are narrow and short-sighted" (Lòpez 56). In an interview, Osgood added that for their part, if they participate at all, citizens often feel that their participation is cursory and frequently ignored when planning decisions are made (Osgood 5 Jul. 2010). She adds that "we are in a transitional period for participation. This is a moment of public participation where people are starting to be open to new methods" (Osgood 15 Mar. 2011). For Osgood, the importance of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program was, in part, to experiment with

new methods for public participation that could help balance the desire for the public's voice to be heard with the need for solid city planning.

The Waller Creek Master Plan

The Waller Creek area in downtown Austin is undergoing major transition. Historically a site of flooding and neglect, sections of Waller Creek currently contain pollution, homeless settlements, and approximately 28 acres of floodplains unusable for development. In June 2010, the City of Austin began a massive tunnel bypass project to divert floodwaters and make 20 city blocks of desirable, and in many locations, underutilized downtown land area, available for development. The Waller Creek Master Plan, created in collaboration with city planners, ecologists, focus groups of Austin residents, and other stakeholders, maps out plans for the future development of this land.

According to Osgood, while the City of Austin has secured the funding for the Tunnel Project, little funding exists for the development of the proposed Master Plan. Upon the Tunnel Project's scheduled completion in 2014, the City of Austin may ask Austinites to vote on a bond issue regarding the Master Plan. If the city engages voters about the current redevelopment proposals for the Waller Creek area, citizens may be more interested in coming out to vote on the issue and will be able to make a more informed decision about the Master Plan and its funding.

When the city begins its public participation process for the Waller Creek Master Plan in 2014, they will likely use more traditional methods of public participation. These may include town hall meetings, surveys, and information sessions. These methods, while useful in many ways, are often criticized for their dull atmosphere and limitations around gathering information, and their inability to reach residents who do not have the

time or inclination to attend a city meeting. This study investigates the use of applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops and events as additional methods for engaging Austin citizens in this city planning issue.

Critical Pedagogy, Applied Theatre, and Arts-Based Civic Dialogue

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* educator and critical pedagogy theorist Paulo Freire argues for a humanistic alternative to the traditional "banking concept of education" (72). In the banking method, the teacher's task is to narrate static knowledge for students to memorize and regurgitate mechanically. The students are viewed as empty vessels waiting to be filled by a teacher, who holds all the power and knowledge in the classroom (Freire 72). This becomes oppressive because it does not allow students to think or make decisions for themselves. Freire proposes interrupting the power dynamics of the banking system by engaging students in critical dialogue and empowering them to privilege their lived experiences as sites of learning. When teachers and students embrace multiple dialogues and perspectives, learning can become a democratic process in which students find agency in their own knowledge construction. As they share power, students and teachers become co-learners, re-envisioning their world together rather than accepting the reality given to them (Freire 80).

Freire's philosophy is in line with the aims of applied theatre, which strives to affect positive transformation by helping participants collaboratively and creatively re-envision their world. Theorist and practitioner Philip Taylor defines applied theatre as "a theatre that is not simply a presentational medium that occurs within a conventional mainstream theatre house," but a form that moves into community settings "for the purposes of helping the audience, or the participants, grapple with an issue, event, or

question of immediate public and personal concern" (xx). In this study, our intention was to use applied theatre, with an emphasis on elements of critical pedagogy, and the collective creation of site-specific performance, to engage UT Austin students and the general public in connecting with, responding to, and re-envisioning Waller Creek. Applied theatre is uniquely situated to serve the public participation in city planning process because its theories and practices are rooted towards collaborative, inclusive, democratic participation in a creative group process. According to scholars Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton, an applied theatre process is defined by:

> -focus on multiple perspectives
>
> -less reliance on words
>
> -more exploration of movement and image as theatre language
>
> -theatre as a close, direct reflection of actual life with an overt political intent to raise awareness and to generate change
>
> -a collective approach to creating theatre pieces in which the makers themselves become aware and capable of change
>
> -audience as an important and active participant in the creation of understanding, and often, of the action (11)

By using process-based practices such as movement, image, and collective creation, I hoped to disrupt the power dynamics, specifically the banking methods, of traditional public participation in city planning. Drawing on some of Friere's radical efforts in education, I wanted to use applied theatre as a consciousness-raising tool to help participants examine the reality of Waller Creek and reflect upon what roles they might have in making decisions about its future.

In addition to my work in critical pedagogy and applied theatre, this project also engages with arts-based civic dialogue literature. According to Animating Democracy, a

program focusing on civic engagement through the arts, *civic dialogue* refers specifically to public (not just private) dialogue in which people discuss civic issues, policies or decisions of consequence to their lives, communities and society" (Assaf, Korza, and Schaeffer-Bacon). *Arts-based civic dialogue* is a process whereby "the artistic process and/or the art presentation provides a key focus or catalyst for public dialogue on an issue" (Assaf, Korza, and Schaeffer-Bacon). While applied theatre has similar goals of engaging the participants in dialogue, its content does not necessarily engage with the language and issues of city government issues and policies. Because this project was focused on activating city planning, civic dialogue theories add to my study by offering vocabulary that non-arts based dialogue and deliberation practitioners use in their work in city government. Additionally, *arts-based* civic dialogue provides a framework for examining how the specific art forms in "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project worked towards engaging the public in dialogue.

During my workshops and performances, I asked participants to dialogue about the past and current issues of Waller Creek as well as their feelings about participating in city planning in general. Drawing on an arts-based civic dialogue framework, the workshops, performances, and artifacts of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project engaged the public in dialogue in four distinct ways: as a *spark* for civic dialogue, as an *invitation* to participate in civic dialogue, as a *space* for civic dialogue, and as a *form* of civic dialogue itself. Furthermore, this study begins to explore how applied theatre operates as an arts-based civic dialogue program. The history of public participation in city planning, the Waller Creek Master Plan, and the fields of critical pedagogy, applied drama and theatre, and arts-based civic dialogue are all key factors in understanding the significance of the "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project, as well as how future applied theatre projects may function as a catalyst for dialogue within and around city planning.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

In this chapter, I introduced "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" applied theatre program, outlined my guiding questions and research methodology, and offered the background and significance of the project. In chapter two, I discuss the challenges of collaborating with non-theatre artists on a creative project that achieves common goals. I explore the role that goal-setting, communication, and reflection played in my partnership with urban designer Lynn Osgood. In chapter three, I use place attachment theory to examine how an applied theatre practitioner can use applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops and events as methods for engaging citizens in a city planning process at Waller Creek. I explore participants' attachment to and engagement with Waller Creek and potential for participating in city planning. In chapter four, I examine how an applied theatre practitioner translates participatory, applied theatre workshops and events into an artifact that can be useful to city planners. I argue for the importance of moving from participatory theatre workshops and dialogue with participants towards an interactive artifact that communicates the thoughts and opinions of participants about Waller Creek to city planners and other citizens. In chapter five, I situate this project in the field of arts-based civic dialogue and, based on the findings from my study, I offer suggestions for employing applied theatre in public participation in a city planning process. I conclude with a call for applied theatre practitioners to consider how their work can contribute to arts-based civic dialogue around issues in their own communities.

Chapter Two: Collaborating with Non-Theatre Artists

"The essence of drama may be conflict—
but the essence of *creating* drama turns out to be cooperation."
–Robert Viagas, The Alchemy of Theatre

In this chapter, I explore how an applied theatre practitioner fosters collaboration with non-theatre artists on an artistic project that works toward common goals. This question became important to "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" study because my project partner, Lynn Osgood, and I each came to this project from different disciplines: urban planning and applied theatre, respectively. Each of these fields uses different vocabularies and focuses on related but convergent approaches and goals for social change and community development. Performance studies scholar Shannon Jackson and urban planning scholar Karen Chapple argue that while recent decades have seen a push for interdisciplinary work "across the academic silos" in universities, "less well-represented in these collaborations are ventures bringing together the arts and humanities and public service professions" (478). The authors add that despite their differences in theories, epistemologies, and language, the two areas both prove concerned with social change, "share common roots, and would benefit from integrating their approaches" (Chapple and Jackson 478). Though these scholars seemed to indicate that not a lot of precedent existed for my partnership with Osgood, from what she had told me about her desire to use arts-based practice to shift the current processes for public participation in planning, I believed there was a great deal of potential for collaboration between our respective disciplines.

The underpinnings of partnerships in applied theatre include taking time to develop relationships, developing open communication about agendas and expectations, and keeping partners informed as the project inevitably shifts (Prendergast and Saxton

190). Therefore, I approached our collaboration as I had my previous projects as an applied theatre practitioner working with non-theatre artists in public schools, community centers, or museums. As I worked with classroom teachers and education directors in these institutions, I tried to emulate characteristics similar to the "ideal collaboration" that teaching artist scholar Eric Booth describes as "seamless, spontaneous, equitable, and respectful" (114). When at all possible, I observed the students or patrons in the classroom or museum in which I would be working beforehand. I exchanged emails and held meetings with the classroom teacher or education director before the project began to determine the educational goals for the students or patrons and how drama and theatre could enhance them. I came to the table with ideas that interested me, but was flexible and open to changing them at any point. I checked in with the teacher/director throughout the project to ensure that we were still fulfilling those goals. I also created assessment tools to document and evaluate our progress. All of these actions are common to applied theatre projects, and were tools I brought into my partnership with Osgood for "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project.

As I began my collaboration with Osgood, I wanted to create a similar sense of open communication and reciprocity. Because I was crossing over into urban planning, a field very different than K-12 and museum education, I encountered different challenges than I had in the past. I struggled with how to communicate with someone working in a field different from applied theatre, and how to preserve my personal and professional needs and goals while carefully considering those of my partner. I tried to honor my partner's knowledge and ideas and while contributing my own creativity and skills to the project. As I analyze and reflect on my collaborative process with Osgood now, I notice that three main threads emerge and suggest guidelines for working with non-theatre artists; the role of goals, communication, and reflection in our collaboration. In this

chapter, I discuss each of these threads, and examine ways that applied theatre practitioners can foster collaboration with non-theatre artists through each of these areas as we negotiate the inevitable challenges encountered in interdisciplinary partnerships.

THE ROLE OF GOALS

One of the biggest challenges within our collaboration on "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" was clarifying the goals of the project. While the definition of applied theatre is ever evolving, the act of "applying" theatre to another field is often considered implicit in the term "applied theatre." As scholar Judith Ackroyd suggests, applied theatre practitioners "share a belief in the power of the theatre form to address something beyond the form itself" (1). In many ways, applied theatre is in service of the field to which it is applied. For example, in the field of museum theatre, practitioner Catherine Hughes offers, "essentially, museum theatre has no goals apart from those of the institution within which it takes place" (51). While I do not believe that the goals of the applied theatre practitioners are necessarily the same as the goals of all partnership organizations, each partner's goals do need to be connected. In this case the partnership was not organized with an outside agency or host organization, but between Osgood and myself. After meeting me at a community-organized Waller Creek event, Osgood contacted me to see if I might be interested in helping her use the arts to involve the public in city planning at the creek. Though the City of Austin was not sponsoring our work, Osgood had a connection to city agencies because she was a member of the city's Waller Creek Citizen's Advisory Committee. Though she possesses a great deal of inside knowledge about the Waller Creek project, she was interested in independently piloting the use of

the arts at Waller Creek, a project that we could possibly refine and later pitch to city officials as a way to involve the public in the planning process.

At the beginning of the project, without an official partnership with an outside agency with its own specific goals, we struggled to find a clear focus for the work. Osgood and I had different personal and professional reasons for taking on the project. The role of joy and enchantment in public space is an important part of Osgood's dissertation work and she hoped to use the arts to get people in Austin interested in Waller Creek and to see it as an "enchanted space." I was searching for a thesis project focused on social change, one that would allow me to escape the ivory tower of the university, to get more involved in my city, and to form lasting relationships and partnerships with other artists and Austinites. I also hoped to put into practice some of the applied theatre processes and theories I was studying as a graduate student.

When Osgood proposed the idea of doing a project at the creek, it seemed a perfect opportunity to achieve many of our desired goals and outcomes. Though I knew little about the specifics of the creek, I was interested in working creatively and collaboratively at an outdoor site connected with history and politics. I was also curious about experimenting with applied drama/theatre interventions among the stakeholders within city planning at the creek. Above all, I hoped that the project would help me get involved in Austin and make a difference in my community. Though we weren't sure exactly what the project would look like, Osgood and I began our collaboration with enthusiasm.

In the weeks after our initial excitement of beginning the project wore off, bewilderment about our goals set in. I reflected on my concerns about not understanding the reasons for the project in my journal:

> I'm feeling a little worried. Did I jump into this too quickly? I feel like I didn't really understand what was going on here enough before getting involved. Was this a good idea? "Where is the love for *you* in this project?" Lynn asked me. I'm not sure. We spent most of the meeting with me asking lots of questions, trying to understand where Lynn is coming from, and trying to understand what's needed right now. I think I'm getting clearer about that. (Field Notes, May 20, 2010)

By asking me "Where's the love for *you* in this project," Osgood invited me to consider what my personal connection was to the project. At that time, I didn't know. I wanted to pour myself into the work, but I didn't understand the content. I was unsure of how to apply my skills and knowledge to this situation, or when and how that was appropriate.

Applied theatre scholar James Thompson reassures practitioners that bewilderment is a normal and necessary part of an applied theatre process:

> [It is the] perplexed condition of the researcher and practitioner as they seek to understand theatre projects in unusual locations or with troubled communities. Rather than being dismissed as a problem, it is welcomed because it counters the over-easy and often stifling effect of certainty. The state of bewilderment is a shorthand for the importance and positive effect of amazement, fascination, and doubt. It is the stimulus for critical and questioning research. I argue that this condition is what has maintained the desire of many practitioners to continue working in applied theatre and to strive for answers. (22)

For Thompson, my confusion at this stage proves normal and "a stimulus for critical and questioning research." It was true that one of the reasons I had been drawn to the project was that it didn't offers easy answers. I was excited by the challenge of discovering how applied theatre could engage the public in city planning, and I needed to be patient and accept my bewilderment as a normal and beneficial step in the process.

Though the bewilderment I felt was normal, it may have been alleviated somewhat if I had moved more slowly through the initial goal-setting process. Taylor argues that practitioners should ask themselves a number of questions at the start of a project, including, "Who is the audience for the applied theatre? What does the applied theatre project aim to achieve? How can the applied theatre be designed to meet the needs

of the audience?" (Taylor 10) But even as I tried to ask myself these questions, I continued to spin in bewilderment about our goals:

> There's so much I don't understand. I'm in a field [city planning] that makes little sense to me. Lynn talked about the former state of urban planning, and how it doesn't really work. I asked, 'is the goal for people to get to make some sort of decision about what happens with Waller Creek?' 'No,' she seemed to be saying. 'That probably won't happen.' Her goal is for people to love Waller Creek. Why? I want to know. Why should people care? So that they'll vote on a bond issue later? Is this project going to seem like propaganda? She said that the problem is that there's money for the tunnel project, but not for the development of the area. So we need business owners to be involved. People with money. Is this the best way to use applied theatre work? (Field notes, May 20, 2010)

By challenging the idea of using of applied theatre to merely convince an audience to vote one way on an issue, or to convince wealthy business owners to participate in a development effort, my field notes suggest that I did not want the project to merely be a mouthpiece for a government or bureaucratic agenda. Instead, I wanted the work "to open up a conversation around a particular issue and challenge community members to use this theatre form as a way to further that conversation" (Taylor 37). In other words, I wanted our work to be what Taylor terms a "change agent" (xxvii). Change agents "highlight how theatrical forms can empower people and societies to investigate the problematic nature of the world in which they live and the possible worlds they might inhabit" (Taylor xxvii). For me, the project would become a change agent if it created theatre that raised issues and questions and empowered participants to investigate the creek area and imagine new possibilities for the situation, rather than simply reacting to a one-sided narrative about the space. I had to discern what part of the Waller Creek situation was "not well in the world" (Taylor xxvii) and which issues and questions I wanted to address so Osgood and I could create a project that would work towards change.

When I spoke to Osgood about my concerns, we agreed that before we determined what kind of change we wanted to see, we had to decide which stakeholders we wanted to target. In this case, the potential community to be served was very broad, as it technically included the entire city of Austin. My first instinct was to work with major stakeholders—people who were already using property near the creek, or had some sort of stake in it. For example, could we use theatre to put concerned music venue owners and city planners in dialogue with each other? Other stakeholders included the Austin Symphony, an organization concerned about how their parking situation might change with new development around Symphony Square, as well as the homeless population living at or around the creek, Brackenridge Hospital employees and others who work nearby, ecologists, users of the parks and hike and bike trails, and the city planners and designers.

I was initially drawn to working with current stakeholders because of the potential for story, drama, and tension between the City of Austin and the respective stakeholders. As a theatre artist, storyteller, and documentary producer, I look for the "heat" or dramatic tension in a situation, the place that includes the most interesting part of the story, enticing the listener to keep reading, watching, or listening to find out what will happen. In applied theatre those moments of "heat" are often where the most potential for change lies for the participants and/or the audience. Nicholson agrees that narrative is central to the goals of applied theatre:

> Drama is in itself a narrative art, of course, and theatre-making is a good place to explore and represent narratives of self-hood and culture and community. There is often an oppositional quality to this work, and many practitioners in applied drama have a particular commitment to ensuring that dominant social narratives are disrupted. (63)

As Nicholson describes, I was eager to highlight the "oppositional quality" of the work, and make sure "that dominant social narratives [were] interrupted" (63). If the dominant social narrative was that the city's plan to redevelop the creek was good, I felt the "heat" was amongst and between the various reactions of the current stakeholders of Waller Creek to the plan. I wanted to use theatre to present oppositional voices that had been ignored and demonstrate how narratives could be changed. For example, I imagined interviewing stakeholders such as the music venue owners and homeless advocates, and with their permission, creating a piece of theatre that explored their feelings about the redevelopment, juxtaposing their voices against the voices of city planners and against each other. I imagined a post-show dialogue in which the different stakeholders could connect with each other and with city officials in a non-threatening way. I hoped the performance could begin to break through some of the barriers of the traditional participation processes such as lack of inclusion, collaboration, and dialogue and create a new narrative about what was possible at the creek.

When I mentioned these ideas Osgood, she seemed wary of creating more drama among the stakeholders than was already there. She liked the idea of creating a theatre piece, but as a member of the Waller Creek Citizen's Advisory Committee, she was aware of how the city was working with these current stakeholders. She felt these groups' concerns were already being assuaged through meetings with city officials and she expressed concern about the potential for the work to be too political and to stir up trouble. As an applied artist interested in dialogue, I wondered, "isn't theatre's job to provoke and challenge? What is the point of doing an applied theatre project that wasn't working towards change?"

Osgood's concerns reminded me of community-based theatre artist Erica Nagel's ethical struggle with a community-based project. I realized that some of the lessons Nagel

learned had ethical applications to our Waller Creek project. Nagel created a documentary theatre piece about the Ramapo Mountain Folk community and its conflict with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC). She struggled to negotiate her own artistic goals with the needs of the community itself:

> In these early drafts of the script, I was so intent on capturing what I found to be the most exciting elements of this story—betrayal, bitterness, and hurt—that I had created a play that was a dramatic indictment of the park's history, not an honest exploration of the story of this community and its desire for reconciliation with the PIPC. I realized I was in danger of becoming what Dwight Conquergood calls a 'curator'—an artist-ethnographer so intrigued by the dramatic and exotic aspects of a community that she or he is more interested in 'exhibiting' it than exploring its story in a dialogic way. In the interest of writing a play that would intrigue an outside audience, I had forgotten what this project could mean to the people whose stories we wanted to tell. (155)

Like Nagel, I was interested in capturing what I felt were the most dramatic parts of the Waller Creek story—the tension between the stakeholders and the city. Though I had good intentions, I too was in danger of becoming Conquergood's "curator." After further discussion with Osgood, I realized that my desire to create a dramatic theatre for civic dialogue piece was based on my perceived needs of the stakeholders and my own interests, rather than on the stakeholders' stated goals and needs. I remained interested in how theatre might activate further discussion between these current stakeholders and the city, but as the newcomer to the situation, I deferred to Osgood's expertise and relationship with the stakeholders.

In order to decide whom our project should serve, Osgood and I made a list of other groups who would be affected by the redevelopment at the creek. We decided that everyday Austinites and students who knew little to nothing about the creek would be the best target audience for our project because they weren't currently engaged by the city in the Waller Creek planning process. We hoped to use the arts to raise awareness about the

creek for people in Austin who knew nothing about it at all. This goal seemed daunting as many environmental and civic issues already compete for attention in Austin. Why would people care about this creek? I started polling friends and acquaintances, informally asking them, "What do you know about Waller Creek?" Most of them knew little or nothing about it. As someone who had little personal connection to Waller Creek myself, I realized I was in the unique position of identifying as both the applied theatre practitioner and a member of our target population. Before I could figure why and how others should care about the creek, I had to figure out why I should care about it myself.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication played a complicated part in my collaboration with Osgood. As we moved through the project, we communicated in two main ways: by inviting each other to visit sites and events important to our respective fields and by translating field-specific vocabulary through conversations, as well as exchanging literature and informational websites about our work. When I explained that I was unsure about why people in Austin should care about the creek, Osgood suggested we go downtown and walk along the creek while I interviewed her. We met downtown on a hot afternoon in July and walked along Waller Creek as we talked. As Osgood shared some history of the creek, I found myself astonished by the beauty of the space and appalled by how abandoned it had become. The area was a very undesirable space in terms of health and safety issues:

> She showed me how overgrown everything is. You can't see into the creek because of all the weeds. We walked under bridges with graffiti painted on them. I pulled out my camera and snapped some photos. 'I just want people to see the potential,' she said. Parts of the path have big holes in them—those would have to be fixed. There was a lot of debris on the path—from the storms, she said.

> ‘Usually it’s dry and stinky here. She kept saying, ‘The bones are all there, ‘ meaning that it has so much potential to be a gorgeous place. It just needs to be cleaned up a bit and the invasive weeds need to be eliminated. She mentioned someone had been raped down there a month ago, and that we should stick to the upper path, so that was a little scary. It was so beautiful, though. ‘Magical,’ I told her. Tucked away. Hidden. ‘It looks abandoned,’ I said. She laughed and said, ‘Well, it is!’ That’s the issue. (Field Notes, July 5, 2010)

Our tour showed me that despite the issues with safety and abandonment, this creek area held a great deal of potential and beauty. I started to see possibilities of things I might want to do at the creek: long walks, bike rides, picnics, and hikes, and it made me sad that the area wasn’t conducive to these kinds of activities. After walking the creek, I was better able to understand what our goal could be with applied theatre work: to help everyday Austin citizens understand what had happened to this place, why they should care about the creek’s future, and how to imagine new narratives for this currently run-down space. Bringing me to the creek also gave Osgood the opportunity to communicate some of her own goals for doing the work:

> We came across a father and daughter with video camera and camera. We asked them what brought them down here. ‘Our hotel’s nearby,’ they said. Lynn apologized several times for the state of our city. ‘We’re working on it!’ she said. After they left I asked her if she felt embarrassed by the state of Waller. ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘It’s like how I feel about my house.’ She said because she’s working on the project she feels a sense of responsibility for it. She can’t just blame the city. (Field notes, July 5, 2010)

By saying “it's like how I feel about my house," Osgood suggested that she felt personal responsibility for the creek's state since she was on the citizen’s advisory committee. These experiences at the creek allowed me to understand more about her goals for targeting everyday Austinites, rather than major stakeholders for the creek. She wanted people to know why and how city planning was happening at the creek and how they could be involved.

As we moved forward with the project, I began translating applied theatre language for Osgood so she could help me decide what kind of artistic methods to use to connect participants to the creek. For example, in one meeting, I explained the notion of "devising theatre":

> I suggested using devised theatre exercises and Lynn asked me what that was. I explained that devising was collaborative creation, or creating plays together, and gave her an example of a devising activity. I told her about taking a group of people to an outside space, splitting them into groups, and having them write down memories sparked by the space onto slips of paper and then create a short performance piece together. Later when we were planning workshop activities she suggested doing something like 'that paper thing.' What paper thing? I asked. It turned out that she was talking about the devising activity I mentioned. We laughed when I explained that that had just been one example of devising. (Field notes, July 5, 2010)

In this moment Osgood was trying out the language from my field. She liked the idea of devising, which for her was a kind of collaborative activity involving paper. I tried to translate the word "devising" by giving a definition and offering an example of what devising entails, but I realized how difficult it is for non-theatre artists to understand applied theatre processes without seeing them first hand.

To give Osgood embodied examples of devising and other drama-based work, I brought her to the UT Austin theatre building to see some drama work in action. I was assisting in a summer Drama-Based Pedagogy and Practice class for classroom teachers, so I invited her to come and watch the teachers perform a short devised piece about their experience in the class.

> Lynn told me that she had a wonderful time talking with the teachers about how excited they were to use drama-based work in their lessons for social studies, science, and other subjects. She also enjoyed watching the devised pieces, and said she got a bit more of a picture of what devising was. (Field notes, July 30, 2010)

Seeing some drama work in action helped Osgood visualize potential activities that we could do in our work. The teachers she met were also mostly non-theatre artists, so it was helpful to show her that we could easily accomplish applied theatre work with participants who were not used to performing. It was inadequate to simply talk about the drama work over coffee. She needed to actually see the work to really understand what we could do with the project.

Osgood brought me to an event related to her field as well. One of my questions about our project had been whether applied theatre work was wanted and needed in planning. Osgood assured me that need exists for this type of work, but that planning professionals likely wouldn't understand the value of the work until they saw it. To demonstrate the need for arts-based work to me, she invited me to attend a one-day workshop with her. Entitled "From Chaos to Collaboration: Raising the Bar in Public Engagement," this event was for public sector representatives, interested citizens, and public engagement practitioners. Staff from the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) facilitated the workshop. The NCDD identifies as "a community of practice centered around conflict resolution and public engagement practices" ("NCDD Community News Blog"). The purpose of the workshop was to demonstrate practical strategies for successful public engagement. Attending the workshop gave me some insight into techniques currently being used by public engagement practitioners for many different purposes. I realized that in order to create buy-in for using applied theatre work to engage the public in city planning it could be helpful for me to learn about some of these dialogue and deliberation techniques, as well as their use value.

While I enjoyed participating in the event, I was struck by how sedentary many of the activities were compared to applied theatre activities. For example, at the beginning of the workshop, as a way of seeing who was in the room, the facilitator asked us to take

out our cell phones and text a message to a phone number corresponding with how we indentified: public engagement practitioner, citizen, public official, or other. We each texted our answer and sat in our chairs watching as the numbers were tallied on a giant screen above our heads. The results showed that we were a group of mostly practitioners, followed by citizens, and then public officials. The speed of the technology creating this data was dazzling, but I was left feeling isolated from the hundreds of other participants in the room. I hadn't even spoken yet to the people across from me at my table. I couldn't help but imagine what applied theatre activities I might try with this group. In addition to the cell phone data survey, I would add more interactive, embodied games and activities. For example, I like to begin workshops with a drama-based activity called "Cover the Space" (Rohd 12), which involves participants getting up on their feet, walking around the room, making eye contact with each other, getting into groups based on criteria they have in common, and introducing themselves. This activity seems to help participants break the ice and find commonalities with each other. This is just one example of an activity that invites participants to interact with each other and explore the workshop space instead of simply sitting in chairs.

Throughout the workshop, more opportunities existed to connect with the workshop attendees and I found the information about public engagement strategies helpful. I was also able to share some of my applied theatre work; many of the people I met seemed intrigued by my work, while others seemed skeptical. I continued to wonder how more creative, embodied activities would change the dynamics of this group. At the end of the workshop I realized that the NCDD had a lot to offer me in terms of training in public engagement techniques that had been tried and proven to work. But I also felt that Osgood was right. Applied theatre has potential for offering this field embodied, creative, inclusive engagement activities and strategies.

THE ROLE OF REFLECTION

Taking time to reflect on our process and check in with each other proved valuable to my partnership with Osgood by offering us a way to talk about challenges with the project. As we worked together we realized that our personal lives sometimes affected our availability and attention during meetings. We started to have informal check-ins at the beginning of every meeting in order to clear our heads before we began our work. She told me when her children were sick, and I told her when I had a big deadline at school. In her book on the collaborative process in theatre projects, Sheila Kerrigan writes about the value of check-ins:

> Check-ins air out secrets and hidden agendas. If you just had a fight with your partner, say so. Then everybody knows what's going on. They won't have to guess about your mood, wonder if they're responsible, and get angry at you for walking under a cloud….you can check in spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and/or physically. (90)

Osgood and I found that checking in about our lives helped us focus on the work at hand. We also checked in often about how we were feeling about the project itself. Kerrigan suggests that collaborators "ask for what you need or clear the air about conflicts" regarding their projects. She offers phrases like "I'm feeling anxious about how much work and how little time we have" (Kerrigan 90). As I reflect back, I realize that as we made more conscious efforts to reflect on the work—not simply move forward with planning the next stage—our relationship and our project work began to shift. It helped us get to know each other's personal and professional backgrounds and better understand each other's goals and needs.

Our practice of checking in became very useful when we added a third collaborator, UT Austin Department of Art and Art History professor Peter Hall. Hall

was teaching an undergraduate design class in which his students were mapping Waller Creek in terms of design problems. Most of the students' work at the creek involved them walking along it and observing from a distance. The three of us agreed that site-specific performance workshops could be a fun and embodied way for the students to explore and re-imagine the space. In September, we offered a pilot version of the workshops with a different set of Hall's design students who were not studying the creek. While parts of the workshops were successful, I was left wondering what the overarching purpose was for our project. I met Osgood and Hall for a meeting to plan a workshop for the students studying the creek. We were struggling to find a focus for the next workshop, and I realized that it was important for me to check in about my worries:

> I explained that I was feeling upset and confused about why we were doing the project at all. I wanted to know what difference would it make in the world. To my surprise, Lynn and Peter were very open to listening to my concerns and encouraging of me. 'This is all an experiment,' they reminded me. 'You're doing great work.' Lynn asked me what I was confused about and we talked for some time about the creek and what sort of a difference we actually could make there. I reminded her that it was really important to me for the project to have some kind of social change as a goal. I told them I didn't want to be a mouthpiece for the city, and I didn't want a project that was just for fun—I wanted it to mean something. (Field notes, Oct 5, 2010)

Because Osgood and I had a practice of checking in, I felt comfortable voicing my concerns in that moment. Our discussion led to a productive brainstorming session in which we agreed that the project should have a clear focus and overarching social change goal, even if that goal might not have a visible impact for many years. Checking in helped me clear my head and allowed the three of us to develop a more intentional focus and related activities for our next workshop. I was able to have this conversation because Osgood and I established a partnership in which we were free to voice our concerns.

In conclusion, as I look back on my partnership with Osgood now, I realize that though observers of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project may consider the visible drama events—the workshops and performances—the main part of the project, it is what Thompson calls the "complementary practices" (34) that in fact take the most time. In this project, my complementary practices with Osgood included many coffee shop meetings, email discussions, visiting Hall's classes, reserving workshop space, and exchanging information about our fields. I often refer to these activities as "the work before the work," but these activities were not merely preliminary work. They proved central to our applied theatre process. Applying theatre to the field of city planning held challenges, but bewilderment was a necessary and valuable part of the project. Articulating goals, translating field-specific language, seeing examples of each other's work in person, and reflecting on the process together helped us have a mutually productive, creative, and enjoyable partnership.

In this chapter, I examined how goal-setting, communication, and reflection shaped my collaboration with urban designer Lynn Osgood on "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project. In the next chapter, I examine how the applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops and events can be used as methods for fostering place attachment and engaging citizens in a city planning process.

Chapter Three: Using Applied Theatre and Site-Specific Performance Workshops to Activate Participation at Waller Creek

> "Integral participation occurs when 'individual or small group contributions [are] registered, considered, and…acted upon.'" –John O'Toole, Theatre in Education

In the previous chapter I examined how applied theatre practitioners can foster collaboration and communication with non-theatre artists on an artistic project that achieves common goals. This chapter offers a study of how applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops and events can be used as methods for fostering place attachment and engaging citizens in a city planning process. In order to look at this question, I also examined how applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops can offer dialogic, interactive, and inclusive tools for creating collaborative participation in a city planning process. I begin with a brief discussion of the redevelopment at Waller Creek and the limitations of traditional methods of public participation in city planning. I then offer an examination of how our workshops that combine applied theatre and site-specific performance worked to foster feelings of ownership and connection with Waller Creek, a first step towards civic participation in the city's development plans for this area. To this end, I analyze data from pre- and post-workshop surveys, as well as group discussions from participants at four of the workshops I facilitated. I use this data to examine changes in participants' feelings of ownership of the creek and their relationship in general to it. I also explore how the roots of Freire's ideas of disrupting power within traditional banking methods of education (73) influenced the applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops. Like Freire's critical pedagogy, in which students and teachers become co-learners, rather than empty vessels and static fillers of those vessels (73), our program worked towards building partnerships, disrupting prevailing power

structures, and leveling the playing field among participants and planners in a city planning process. Finally, I conclude that helping participants form relationships with abandoned spaces such as Waller Creek helps lay the groundwork for using applied theatre to activate participation in place-based city planning.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CITY PLANNING

City planning theorists Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher argue that traditional, legally-required methods of public participation in government decision-making in the United States have failed. They contend that

> public hearings, review, and comment procedures in particular…do not achieve genuine participation in planning or other decisions; they do not satisfy members of the public that they are being heard; they seldom can be said to improve the decisions that agencies and public officials make; and they do not incorporate a broad spectrum of the public. (Innes and Booher 419)

Furthermore, the authors make the case that these types of methods "often pit members of the public against each other, as they feel compelled to speak of the issues in polarizing terms to get their points across" (Innes and Booher 419). The methods can make it more difficult for decision-makers to sort through the information they receive, and also "discourage busy and thoughtful individuals from wasting their time going through what appear to be nothing more than rituals designed to satisfy legal requirements" (Innes and Booher 419). Given these circumstances, it's no wonder that public officials have become ambivalent about hearing from the public at all.

I consider myself one of the "busy and thoughtful individuals" that Innes and Booher describe. I want to live in clean, safe, well-maintained city that cares about the health and welfare of its citizens. I am particularly interested in planning decisions that affect my surrounding neighborhood and the arts organizations to which I belong.

Unfortunately, as a graduate student and a teaching artist, I find it difficult to make time to invest in city planning issues that do not seem to affect my daily life. When I began this project, I knew little about city planning in Austin, or how and why I should get involved. My impression of people who did participate in planning was that they were a small group of opinionated citizens with a lot of time on their hands. When Osgood approached me about creating an arts-based project for Waller Creek, I had little understanding of where the creek was or the importance of caring about the space.

The more I learned about planning during this applied theatre project, the more I realized why public participation matters. If we don't participate, we allow other people to make decisions that impact our whole city. In the case of Waller Creek, not participating in the planning process means not having a say in the future redevelopment of the downtown area around the creek or in how the city spends our dollars. This redevelopment is scheduled to begin in 2014 after the completion of the Waller Creek Tunnel Project, a massive endeavor that will reduce the floodplain and make the land safe to build on. In a recent Waller Creek Project community newsletter, Council Member Sheryl Cole writes, "The Waller Creek Tunnel Project is a long-term investment in Austin's future and an opportunity to turn a forgotten, flood-prone creek into a vibrant part of downtown" ("Waller Creek Tunnel Project" 1). While having a vibrant downtown area will not directly affect the daily lives of everyone in Austin, it will affect many of us. It will impact people who want to use a hike and bike trail between UT Austin and downtown, those who care about the future of the music venues located along the creek, individuals who are homeless and those who care about what happens to the homeless people currently living along the creek, and people invested in what kinds of businesses set up shop in the area. In short, it will affect a lot of people in Austin. The more I understood how the redevelopment project would affect me and the people in my

community, the more I grew interested in what it would take to motivate everyday citizens to participate in decision-making regarding Waller Creek.

"Collaborative Participation"

Innes and Booher argue that increasing public participation in city planning will require a major paradigm shift in how we view and implement participation (428). They contend that new participatory methods in city planning must include "dialogue, collaboration, interaction, and inclusion" in order to be effective (Innes and Booher 428). According to the authors, new alternative methods should go beyond reaching the most vocal and most elite citizens who, as the authors note, are usually the ones who have time to attend hearings or serve on special committees or advisory boards (Innes and Booher 428). They describe the need for a "collaborative participation," which could address many of the problems inherent in traditional methods (Innes and Booher 428):

> Instead of seeing participation as citizens and government in a formal, at most two-way interaction where citizens react to proposals from government, participation should be seen as a multi-way interaction in which citizens and other players work and talk in formal and informal ways to influence action in the public arena before it is virtually a foregone conclusion. (Innes and Booher 428-29)

As an applied theatre practitioner, I read this argument for collaborative participation as a call to action. While fully addressing the limitations of public participation in city planning remains beyond the scope of my study, Innes and Booher tapped into hallmarks of critical pedagogy in applied theatre practice in their stated desire for collaboration, inclusion, interaction and dialogue. The main goal of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project was to use interactive, collaborative performance workshops and events to create an awareness of, and connect new stakeholders to, Waller Creek, including its past,

present, and future civic issues. The parallels in theory around collaborative participation in city planning and critical pedagogy in applied theatre offered me some clear entry points for experimenting with how techniques from applied theatre could activate public participation at Waller Creek.

Osgood and I wanted to go beyond serving the usual participants and democratize participation by reach everyday Austinites who possessed little awareness of the creek and its significance. We hoped our project would help people form relationships with the creek, and we were interested in exploring how collaborative performance-making could facilitate dialogue and interaction between and amongst participants and city planners. To that end, I drew from a combination of techniques and theories from applied theatre and site-specific performance, and later, theories of place attachment, to develop and enact the project.

Applied Theatre and Site-Specific Performance

The practice of moving outside of "conventional mainstream institutions" (Nicholson 2) in applied theatre closely parallels Innes and Booher's goals of moving participation outside of traditional methods. In "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project, participants were not passive spectators as in traditional theatre and in some traditional methods of participation. Our workshops included active, embodied activities like games, story circles, improvisation, creating tableaux, and collaboratively creating, or devising, theatre to help participants explore issues and work together. Embodied activities that explore participants' lived experiences as well as city planning issues works through the content of the workshops in lively ways, breaks down barriers between participants, and cultivates community (Wilcox 117). By engaging in interactive, collaborative applied

theatre activities within a planning context, project participants had a safe space in which to rehearse the type of multi-way interaction and dialogue that Innes and Booher argue is essential for influencing action in city planning.

Because this project was so focused on connecting people to a particular place and space, I chose to combine the process-based work of applied theatre with ideas from the evolving field of site-specific performance. Performance studies scholar Fiona Wilkie defines site-specific performance as "performance specifically generated from/for one selected site" (qtd. in Pearson 8). Creating site-specific performance requires its creators to be in dialogue with the performance space, allowing the space to influence or even dictate, how the performance is devised, as well as the form and content of the piece. While theatre artists most often create site-specific performance for an outside audience, my goals with this work were different. Rather than just creating a product for an audience, I wanted to investigate what role creating site-specific performance played in helping participants form relationships with the creek and with each other. By combining critical pedagogy with embodied, space-exploratory activities from applied theatre and site-specific performance, we developed process-based workshops that allowed participants to break down barriers between themselves and interact physically with the Waller Creek area.

WORKSHOP PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

Next I explore the ways in which the "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops worked to foster feelings of ownership around, and connection with, Waller Creek. Osgood and I conducted a total of four workshops for the project. We conducted the first two workshops with senior UT Austin

design students, the third with junior UT Austin design students who were studying the creek for a class, and the fourth was with a community group called Austin Community Living. Though the workshop format and content developed throughout the project, each experience offered a combination of applied theatre and site-specific performance processes: a series of warm-up and community-building activities; learning and practicing simple performance tools using movement, image, and text; a walk to the creek, often with time for the participants to observe it; a sharing of the story of the creek's past, present, and future issues; and time for devising and responding to site-specific performance pieces at the creek with small groups. Osgood and I ended each session with a ten to thirty-minute group discussion about the themes raised in the workshop and the participants' experiences in the work. I also gathered data about the participants through pre- and post-workshop surveys and by watching and coding video recordings of the workshops. In each form of data I looked for evidence of participants' shifts in interest in and their relationship to Waller Creek and to city planning.

Place Attachment

As Osgood and I developed the project, place attachment was another area of study that influenced the development of our applied theatre/performance workshops around Waller Creek. Theorists and practitioners from diverse fields such as psychology, geography, and social ecology, study place attachment as a way of understanding the meaning that particular places hold for the people who inhabit them and how this meaning affects the decisions they make. Scholar James J. Ponzetti, Jr defines place attachment as "the emotional connection formed by an individual to a physical location due to the meaning given to the site as a function of its role as a setting for experience"

("Growing Old…"). He adds that "a range of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behavior, as well as feelings are evoked through attachment to place. Thus, place attachment involves an elaborate interplay of emotion, cognition, and behavior in reference to place" (Ponzetti, "Growing Old…"). As my collaborators and I worked to engage a broad public in this place called Waller Creek, this theory offered us specific criteria for considering attachment to place. Though we did not set up the study to measure place attachment in an intentional way, we noticed interesting relationships between place attachment and the data we did find.

Environmental psychologist Maria Lewicka writes that "'place' is the core concept in environmental psychology" (211) and that while there is a

> consensus concerning definition of place and how it differs from the related concept of space (place is space endowed with meaning), there is much less agreement on how one should define and measure people's bonds with places (place attachment, place identity, sense of place, place dependence, etc.). (211)

Lewicka offers her own place attachment scale, which consists of twelve statements, which participants rate on five-point scales. One indicates the participant definitely did not agree with the statement, and five indicates the participant definitely did agree with the statement. The statements describe feelings towards place:

> <u>Place Attachment Scale</u>
> (1) I know the place very well
> (2) I defend it when somebody criticizes it
> (3) I miss it when I am not here
> (4) I don't like this place
> (5) I feel secure here
> (6) I am proud of this place
> (7) It is a part of myself
> (8) I have no influence on its affairs
> (9) I want to be involved in what is going on here
> (10) I leave this place with pleasure
> (11) I would not like to move out from here
> (12) I am rooted here (Lewicka 229)

While this particular scale was created for a study about attachment to place of residence, it offers some criteria that prove relevant to public places as well. I wanted to know how our workshops could foster these types of connections to Waller Creek. Though I did not ask the participants specific questions about place attachment to Waller Creek (which I would do if I facilitated and studied this project again), some of their responses to the questionnaires and post-workshop discussions offer insight about how the performance exercises could affect place attachment, or "bonds people develop with places" (Lewicka 211).

WORKSHOP 1: EXPLORING ATTACHMENT TO WALLER CREEK

In late September, 2010, I engaged twelve UT Austin Senior art and design students in two consecutive four-hour workshops to experiment with and develop activities for "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program. Throughout the process, I was interested in how applied theatre and site specific performance work could work to connect the students with Waller Creek, and thus participation in city planning. I began the first workshop by asking the participants to respond to a short answer, pre-workshop questionnaire to assess their relationship to and understanding of Waller Creek prior to participating in our workshops. Across the board, the questionnaires demonstrated little concrete knowledge of the creek. However, as I examined the data, I noticed that some students appeared to have a reference point for the creek prior to the workshops, while some did not. I organized their responses about what they did know into categories based on these reference points or lack thereof. In the chart below, the codes in the left column describe the students' degree of experience with the creek and my interpretation of

whether or not they had a reference point for it prior to our workshops. The right column includes their actual responses from the surveys.

What do you know about Waller Creek?	
Reference point + Level of personal experience with Waller Creek	*Participant Response*
No reference point or personal experience	Pretty much nothing. I think it is a park?
	Don't know anything about it, unless I have passed by it, but just didn't know the name.
Heard it referenced on campus, but no personal experience	I've heard part of it runs through campus and there are plans for construction concerning it.
	Very little, I have heard about the creek in the department.
A reference point in Austin, but no personal experience	Not a whole lot, I know it is one of the small creeks around Central Austin.
	It's near Lamar, right? And it flooded last week.
A reference point, but low personal experience	I know it runs behind Texpresso, and that currently there is some kind of controversy concerning ownership.
	It is UT's creek that takes overflow to Town Lake/Ladybird Lake. Waller flows along San Jacinto on campus and while I thoroughly enjoy the natural aspect, it gets rather nasty.
	It was located near my freshman dorm. It has a large following of dog walkers.

Table 1: What do you know about Waller Creek?

For the question "Do you feel any ownership of Waller Creek," the results were unanimous: "Nope." The data indicated that most of the students were not very familiar with Waller Creek, nor did they feel ownership of or attachment to the place. Given that the creek is located across the street from the UT Austin Art and Art History building where these students attend classes, I found their lack of familiarity with it somewhat

surprising. I wondered how our performance workshops could shift their interest in and knowledge about the area.

At the beginning of the project, I didn't believe that it mattered which part of the creek we used in terms of participants' attachment to it. At that time, Austin temperatures soared to 100+ degrees, so during the first four-hour workshop we spent most of our time learning performance vocabulary inside an air-conditioned classroom in the art building. While I knew spending so much time away from the creek was not ideal for attaching to the space, I wanted everyone to be comfortable and was also curious to see how process-based applied theatre activities away from the space could help the students understand the issues at Waller Creek.

We chose to conduct the outdoor portion of these workshops at the section of Waller Creek that runs between the art and theatre buildings on campus. The UT Austin section of the creek is not part of the proposed downtown redevelopment, but working at that area of the creek downtown was challenging because of the extreme weather conditions and lack of transportation for students. Since we would be visiting the campus section of the creek, Osgood and I decided to focus these first workshops on the dramatic history of Waller Creek at the University of Texas at Austin. We wondered how learning about the 1969 "Battle of Waller Creek," that occurred at UT, would affect the students' relationship with the creek. The Battle was a large student protest that occurred when UT Austin administration decided to tear down trees at a section of Waller Creek to make way for a stadium (Jones). Lewicka contends that "awareness of the place history intensifies place attachment, however, probably also the reverse holds true…and people attached to a place express more interest in the place's past and in their own roots than people with fewer emotional bonds" (211). We hoped that since students presumably already had an emotional connection to UT, they might be interested in UT's history with

the creek, and therefore in the history and current issues at the part of the creek just south of campus. In practice, the students did find the story of the Battle interesting, and one group later created a performance piece that reenacted it.

Before we began the first workshop, I had concerns about whether the students would be willing to collaborate with each other. Hall explained to me that his students, close to graduation as professional designers, were trained to spend most of their days working independently at their computers and drafting tables. He warned that they often competed with each other and might be reticent to doing theatre exercises. In practice, while some of the students mentioned at the beginning of the workshop that they were nervous about performing, there was a lot of laughter and playful teasing during the warm-up games. By the time we started creating performances, the students' attitudes towards collaborative performance creation had shifted:

> When they created performances using the text from 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat,' each group created a unique, engaging piece that played with the text in different ways. It felt like mock performance art. Peter told me later that he had never seen some of the students act so outgoing and goofy. (Field notes, Sept. 24, 2010)

Applied theatre practitioner and scholar Errol Bray argues that this type of collaborative performance creation, or playbuilding, is not only playful, it allows participants to try on the various roles in drama and theatre, including playwright, director, designer, critic, and others.

> It introduces participants to the creative discipline and co-operation required in theatre…The process involves rehearsing the play as it is created, thus developing a strong presentation that comes to belong to the group in a very personal and committed way. (Bray qtd. in Prendergast and Saxton 19)

In other words, the act of adapting a familiar children's song gave the students the opportunity to learn to cooperate with each other to quickly create their own piece of

theatre that they were excited to share. The spirit of playfulness and willingness to try that the students showed during the "Row, Row, Row" activity continued as we moved outside to Waller Creek to continue the second half of the workshop. The students seemed excited to create performance pieces about the creek's history:

> I broke them into small groups to create pieces about the history of the creek, and there was only a little hesitation before they stood up and started trying things together. The pieces they created were hard to hear due to the noise from buses and construction, but it was clear from their faces and the energy in their bodies that they that they were enjoying themselves. (Field notes, Sept. 24, 2010)

As I state in my field notes, playing community-building games and facilitating creative activities, like adapting children's songs into performances that got the students laughing and interacting, proved an important step in helping them feel comfortable enough with performance vocabulary to create pieces at the creek. The workshop reinforced to me that applied theatre exercises like playbuilding are powerful tools for community-building and for preparing participants to explore issues through performance. In order to foster this same sense of playfulness and collaboration with other participants, I included these types of games and activities in all my subsequent workshops.

WORKSHOP 2: EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF "SITE-SPECIFIC" ELEMENTS

The second workshop we facilitated with these students solidified for me the importance of being at the specific site of the Waller Creek redevelopment downtown, rather than at the creek at UT Austin. After our warm-ups in the second workshop, I attempted to help the group brainstorm words and phrases about the issues and history of Waller Creek. The group struggled to offer words and phrases, but I decided to continue with my plan to use the words in an activity called "Circle Sculpt" (Rohd 38). In this activity, I invited the group to make human sculptures based on the few words they had

generated. I called out a word, such as "homelessness," and one or more students sculpted other participants' bodies into an image representing that word. It became clear that I needed to change something about the activity when the group struggled in frustration.

> Finally I stopped, and asked, 'Why is this hard?' There was a pause, and then one student said, 'Because we don't know enough about Waller Creek.' Another student said, 'No, because we don't care enough about it.' 'Why don't we care?' I asked. 'Because it's just some creek. Why would we?' one student said. 'Well,' I said. 'Are there any bodies of water in Austin that we do care about?' They thought for a moment. 'Yes—Barton Springs!' 'Okay, why do we care about Barton Springs?' 'Because we spend time there, because it's fun to be there, because there are things we can do there.' 'All right,' I said. 'Let's go outside.' (Field notes, Sept. 24, 2010)

The participants expressed their lack of attachment to, or interest in, the creek during this part of the workshop. Their statements— "We don't know enough about the creek," "We don't care about the creek," and "It's just some creek. Why should we [care]?" seem to be in direct opposition to the place attachment criteria offered in Lewicka's scale: "I defend it when somebody criticizes it," "I miss it when I am not here," "I want to be involved in what is going on here, and "It is a part of myself." Despite having experienced one workshop about Waller Creek already, these participants did not yet feel much of a personal bond with this place.

This conversation marked a major turning point in the workshop. When the students showed signs of boredom and frustration, I thought I had lost their excitement about the creek. While we had told them some stories about the history of the creek, they hadn't had enough personal experiences at the creek to have feelings about its current issues. Unsure of what would happen next, I decided to see how collaborative performance creation at the actual site would shift their interest in the creek. I led the students outside to a beautiful part of Waller Creek situated behind UT's Alumni center

in a hidden and quiet part of campus, near where we'd held the first outdoor workshop. In contrast to the part of the creek under consideration for re-development, this area of the creek proved inviting, clean, and well-kept. I broke the participants into small groups and invited them to collaboratively create devised performances, based on a set of certain criteria, in and about the creek. These students, who had previously seemed bored and unable to answer questions, transformed into energetic, playful performers. They grabbed musical instruments and objects such as sticks and leaves from the creek to use in their performances, and in their devised and performed pieces, they splashed around in the creek, imitated nearby construction sounds with their voices, wrapped colored yarn around their heads, danced, played tambourines and chanted, "This is our creek! This is our creek!" (Field notes, Sept. 24, 2010).

While the joy I observed was fun to watch, it seemed strange that they would have turned their interest in the creek around so quickly. I wondered if the workshop had actually fostered deeper connection to the creek, or if it was merely a fun break from their classroom routine. In post-workshop surveys, given after the second workshop, the students did indicate that their knowledge about the creek had changed. I organized and coded their responses by types of new knowledge they gained:

What do you know about Waller Creek now, as compared to last week?	
Type of New Knowledge about Waller Creek	*Participant Response*
History/Current Significance	More about the history.
	A lot. I know its history. I know issues surrounding and complicating it right now.
	Long political and social history that speaks of the university and its agenda.
	I know much more about the history of its development/preservation on campus.
	Its history, significance, in terms of development and role in how Austin is changing, and also understanding my own relationship with Waller Creek.
Physical State	What it looks/feels/smells/sounds like (at least for a few stretches on campus).
	That it remains polluted.
Potential for future	It is a site with enormous potential for public interaction, recreation, and leisure.
	What it is and that it is valuable.
Location	Where it is.
	I now know that it is the creek that flows through campus.

Table 2: What do you know about Waller Creek now, as compared to last week?

According to the responses to the questionnaire, most of their new knowledge concerned the history and current significance of the creek. Lewicka argues that knowing the history of a place can be an important step in beginning to connect to that place (211), and this seemed to be the case with our participants in the first two workshops. Osgood and I spent time telling stories about the history of the creek that we had gathered from our research and invited the students to perform their memory of these stories. These

experiences ultimately became part of their memories about, and relationship to, the site. In addition, the workshops fostered the students' knowledge about the creek's location, physical state, and potential.

The questionnaires also asked participants to reflect on their feelings of ownership of the creek. I organized and coded their "yes" and "no" responses by the types of reasons they indicated for ownership or lack thereof:

Do you feel any ownership of Waller Creek? Why/why not?	
Reasons for Ownership/Lack of Ownership	*Participant Response*
Yes, because of workshop time spent at the creek	Yes. Because it is no longer foreign to me. I have traveled to and in the space and don't feel out of place there. I could comfortably be there again, which feels like ownership.
	I do now. Being down there and being a part of it is essential to forming a relationship.
Yes, because I have performed there and know stories about it	I do, now that we have strolled it and performed in/around it. I have a personal connection to it, now that there are stories I can tell.
	Parts of it. I feel ownership of the part by the union, now that I have spent some time there—splashed in its water, declared it mine ('This is my creek!')
Yes, because of previous connections	I do, considering I cross over it every day, and I always look down on it.
Some, after playing in/exploring the space	I am starting to…just based on learning more about it and exploring the space.
	Some, after coming to play in the space.
No, I need more time there	No, need more time and memories; other people.
	No. My interaction with the creek is very minimal and I feel more like a visitor rather than a resident.

Table 3: Do you feel any ownership of Waller Creek? Why/why not?

While not all of the students reported "yes" to feeling new ownership of the creek, all those who did report a shift in feelings of ownership attributed the change to some of the activities in the workshops. The activities mentioned include strolling at the creek, traveling to and in the space, performing in/around it, splashing in the creek, declaring it their own, having stories about it to tell, and simply being down there (Post-workshop survey 9/24/10). The students who reported that they now felt only "some" ownership indicated that while playing in and exploring the space had helped them develop some connection to the creek, they still needed more time there to claim ownership. Those who reported feeling no ownership of the space also expressed that they needed more time in the space to develop these feelings. The responses to this question suggest that the participants believe that doing a variety of activities over a period of time—including the performances workshops—at Waller Creek has an effect on participants' feelings of ownership to it.

The questionnaires also indicated that most students felt at least a small shift in their relationship to Waller Creek from the previous week:

How has your relationship to Waller Creek changed, if at all, since last week? Why?	
Type of Relationship Change	*Participant Response*
More feelings of personal connection	It is a bit more personal. My mind is more open about it. This is because of the workshops.
	Interested to follow it through Austin and know better spots to sit and observe it.
	I feel a personal kinship and fondness towards Waller Creek, not to mention indignation towards people who litter it now.
	I am aware of it and excited about it.
	Yes—time. I have developed some amount of connection with it. I have memories here now.
	Much more comfortable in the space.
More awareness, though relationship hasn't necessarily changed	I have become more aware of it but my relationship hasn't really changed.
	I notice it now when I pass by it or cross it. I can see the potential it was as a destination on campus.
	I have a clearer picture of the creek and its current state.

Table 4: How has your relationship to Waller Creek changed, if at all, since last week? Why?

While not all of the students felt their relationship to the creek had changed, most indicated that they had developed some personal connections to it. Their questionnaires, coupled with my observations of their excitement during the outdoor portion of the workshops, and their performances around the history of the creek certainly seemed to indicate that our work increased their interest in this place. Though this information was useful, I was left wondering what workshop activities shifted the students' relationship to the creek and why. In a future study I would investigate this more specifically.

Osgood and I were also curious if the workshops could move students from a lack of awareness or interaction with the creek to imagining themselves doing activities at the creek in the future. Osgood explained that participants picturing themselves doing activities offers two factors to our study. It not only indicates attachment to the area, but people's ideas for future uses for redeveloped areas at Waller Creek are valuable information for city planners. It indicates how people might use the space and what changes would need to be made to accommodate the area for those activities. For example, if people report they would like to hike and bike in an area, city planners can consider how to design the space for trails. When asked in our post-workshop survey, "Do you imagine yourself doing anything at or near Waller Creek? If so, what?" all of the students replied "yes." I organized and coded their responses by type of activity:

Do you imagine yourself doing anything at or near Waller Creek? If so, what?	
Activity	*Participant Response*
Relaxing	I can envision myself visiting the creek to meditate/clear my mind during the school year.
	I might go and sit by Waller Creek now that I know there are some nice areas to relax.
	Yes. I think that sometimes I'll come and picnic here, or just relax if I need a quick, convenient break from the city or school.
Photography	I plan to keep the creek in mind when working on photography in the future.
Reading	Sitting and reading; a nice setting near our building.
	I hope to come back again. Maybe to read in the shelter of one of the tunnels on a day w/o construction.
Spending time	Yes, I'd like to spend more time down here.
Being an advocate for the creek	I can see myself taking an active role in celebrating and informing others about Waller Creek.
	I'd help clean it up.

Table 5: Do you imagine yourself doing anything at or near Waller Creek? If so, what?

Most of the students indicated that they now saw the UT area of Waller Creek as a space for doing leisure activities like reading and relaxation. This data suggests that most of these students were able to picture themselves doing something at the creek in the future. This was an important indicator that the workshop activities helped transform the area into one that the students were now comfortable visiting, and could help indicate to city planners whether people want to use a space, and if so, how they might like to use it.

While physical and performative activities at the creek fostered some students' connection with it, storytelling—by Osgood and me, as well as the students—appears to have played a role in helping them engage with the creek as well. In the final question on

pre-workshop questionnaire, "What stories do you know about Waller Creek?" nine out of 12 students responded "none" (Pre-workshop survey Sept. 23, 2010). When asked this same question in the post-workshop survey, nearly every student wrote about a story he/she now knew. While most listed stories about the history of the creek, two comments proved an exception. One student wrote, "Our own story that we just created" and another said, "Stories about the things we did here—our performances, experiences, the things we saw." Scholar Jen Harvie indicates that for participants like these, creating site-specific performance can be "powerful as a vehicle for remembering and forming a community" (qtd. in Pearson 9):

> …its location can work as a potent mnemonic trigger, helping to evoke specific past times related to the place and time of performance and facilitating a negotiation between the meanings of those times. (qtd. in Pearson 9)

These last two comments revealed that for these students, not only were Osgood and I helping participants understand the history of the creek, we were helping them create their own new stories of what they had done with each other at the creek. According to Harvie, when they return to the creek later, being in the space may trigger memories of the community they had at the site. When a site contains meaning and memories for a person, the person feels more attached to that place.

During the final workshop discussion, the students, Peter Hall, and I stood in a circle next to the creek. I asked the students about their experience of making performance pieces and for advice to help me develop future "Ghosts of Waller Creek" workshops:

> There was a lot of laughter as we talked. 'We got [student's name] to go in the creek!' they said, referring to a student who had been reticent about participating at first. Some of the students were still barefoot from splashing in the creek, wearing colored yarn headbands, and holding musical instruments and props from their pieces. I asked, 'If I wanted to use these types of workshops to help people

> in Austin become more interested in Waller Creek, what do you think is the best way to do that?' 'Take them to the creek!' they said. 'Have them make performances at the creek.' 'Why?' I asked. 'Because it's fun!' one student said. 'We wouldn't have come done here on our own,' said another. 'Now we have memories of coming to this place, so it's easier for us to come back again later.' (Field notes Sept. 24, 2010)

The data from workshop surveys, along with my observations of their joy in performance, and their post-workshop comments, suggest that some of the students started forming emotional bonds with Waller Creek, or place attachment. By creating their own stories and memories at Waller Creek, they gave the creek site meaning because they now saw it as a setting for the performance experiences they had. These students endowed this previously unfamiliar *space* with meaning and their newly created memories transformed it into a *place* for them.

Though the surveys indicated that the workshops certainly had an effect on the participants' relationship to the space, after the second workshop (which was situated in a very nice part of the creek on the UT campus), I troubled over our choice of workshop location. I was concerned by the fact that we hadn't taken the student to the actual site of the Waller Creek that was ripe for redevelopment and city planning. Early on in the project, I felt that the site of our workshops was inconsequential as long as we visited a part of Waller Creek. In hindsight, I realized that Osgood and I spent a great deal of time trying to help participants connect to an area of the creek that had little to do with the creek's redevelopment issues. I assumed that participants who were interested in the UT section of the creek would be able to transfer their connection to the contested areas of the creek downtown. After looking at the survey responses, I realized this was not necessarily the case. Many of the participants' comments contained the word "campus" and referenced performances that were created in specific spaces of the creek that were specific to the portion of the creek that runs through UT. I knew from my own experience

that the downtown area of the creek was a much different place than that of UT. I could not assume that students who felt attached to the UT section of the creek would feel the same about the areas that they had not visited.

At this point in the process, Osgood and I decided to revisit the intent of our work. We were using the project to foster attachment/connection to Waller Creek as a first step in participating in city planning issues around Waller Creek. While the UT section has some pollution issues, it is safer and more picturesque than the downtown section, which is known for issues around homelessness, drug use, and crime. The UT section is also several miles north of the area of the creek under consideration for city planning. These first two workshops were valuable in that they remind Osgood and me that, as Nicholson argues, storytelling creates an imaginary space in which participants can experiment with hypothetical scenarios:

> On this basis, working in the imaginary space of drama enables participants to juxtapose different narrative perspectives, to fictionalize life as it is experienced, and conversely, to make the imaginary world of fiction tangible and 'real.' (64)

The devised, site-specific performance activities offered the participants a space in which to imagine new narratives for how they could interact with the creek. However, I realized that if we wanted to help people really understand the current issues under consideration at the creek, we needed to take participants to the actual site of the proposed redevelopment. I had not felt as invested in the future of Waller Creek until I visited the downtown part myself and made eye contact with homeless men living there, stepped over fallen tree branches and debris, peered into the polluted water, and smelled the urine under the bridges. I suspected others would not understand why participating in decision-making about the proposed redevelopment was important unless they experienced these issues first hand as well. To this end, Osgood and I decided to hold the remaining

workshops at Waterloo Park, a public park along the creek near the downtown area of Austin part of very site under consideration for redevelopment.

WORKSHOP 3: PERFORMING NEW NARRATIVES FOR THE CREEK

To develop the format for the next workshops, I took inspiration from site-specific performance work with Sojourn Theatre and its artistic director Michael Rohd. Sojourn is a theatre for civic dialogue company based in Portland, OR and through my training with them, I began to intentionally focus on the role of space in devising. Over the past ten years, the company has collaboratively created performance pieces that take place in unconventional spaces such as car dealerships and buses, as well as examining statewide issues such as Oregon's failing public school system and tensions between rural and urban communities. Rohd and his company members are interested in the partnership that can occur between space and performance. When they begin a site-specific project, they use the following four lenses to help them consider a space:

> 1. Narrative/Functional—The use or meaning of space, the normal use of a space.
>
> 2. Architecture/landscape of the space—The actual doors, walls, and other architectural elements/how this space could be used as a physical playground.
>
> 3. The Historical/Associative Meanings of a Site—When was this room built? What's been in here? A prom? A wedding? What are the associations of the room? What does it remind you of? What are our personal associations with a room? (e.g. Rohd comes into an empty conference room and immediately thinks of his bar mitzvah)
>
> 4. Politics/Rules of a space—What does a space tell us about how we should behave? How are different people treated in the space? How can you tell? (e.g., signs, landscaping, conference room chairs set up in a certain way.)
>
> (Rohd, AATE conference, August 5, 2010)

In each of the Waller Creek workshops, we asked participants to explore several of these lenses through performance. While the goal of most of the workshops was to foster attachment/ownership to the space, during our third workshop Osgood and I realized that the work could also be used to help participants see new possibilities for the design of elements such as landscape, seating, signage, and lighting at Waller Creek. I held the third workshop with a class of junior UT Austin art and design students who were already studying the complex problems of the creek in a class with Peter Hall. These students had walked along the creek and mapped it in terms of design and safety problems such as broken lights, overgrown foliage, cracked sidewalks, lack of signage, and pollution. Their class assignment invited them to propose new design interventions for the creek area, including ideas for seating, lighting, and landscaping. Hall hoped that our workshop would allow students to explore new parts of the creek area and imagine possibilities for design that they might not have considered if their interaction with the creek was limited to observing the space from the path.

Narrative/Functional Use of the Site

We began by explaining each of Sojourn's four lenses and then saying to the participants, "We're going to do several performance exercises to explore these different ways of thinking about space. All of these should be done in a specific space along the creek" (Field notes, Oct 17, 2010). We explained that we would explore the Narrative/Functional use of the space first. Then we asked them to find a partner and handed each pair a card with these instructions:

> Create a 30-second performance that explores the narrative/functional use of the space through movement. You may use any type of movement we've learned or that you already know: flocking, dance, image work, etc. Think about repetition, solo and unison, and stillness and speed. You have 5 minutes to create this.
> (Lesson plan notes, Oct 17, 2010)

These instructions seemed clear to the students and resulted in short performances of students walking along the creek path pushing strollers, doing Tai Chi, jogging, walking, and picnicking, as well as students hopping around and carrying sticks in their mouths like squirrels and flapping their arms as though they were birds. One pair embodied some of the current problems with the creek. I recorded some of my observations in my journal, reflecting on how the pair embodied the narrative/functional use of space at the creek:

> They began their piece hidden behind concrete pillars that held up a bridge. After a moment they began sneaking around the creek area and snickering as they pretended to tag the bridge with spray paint. They performed this in a space that had already been tagged with graffiti. Audience members laughed when they began to recognize what the performers were doing. (Field notes, Oct. 17, 2010)

Though their performance of vandalism was playful and made the audience laugh, it spoke to some of the visible problems at the creek. After the performance the creators of the piece explained that crime was one of the reasons they did not feel comfortable coming down to this place (Field notes, Oct. 17, 2010). Another participant added that she felt nervous to visit the space because of the overgrown trees and bushes:

> We were talking about the landscaping and the overgrown-ness of it. And I feel like that's what kind of makes me uncomfortable down here. It does make it look more natural, but not being able to see around (she gestures) because of the trees growing over makes it, like, eerie, I guess. (Video transcript, Oct. 17, 2010)

Though these students had spent many hours observing parts of the creek for their class, they still expressed discomfort around their safety in this space. By embodying the roles of vandals, the students stepped out of their own comfort zones to explore activities at the creek that they would not do themselves. This helped them note what problems they saw with the creek, an important step in considering how design interventions, such as

thoughtful landscape design, could aid in forming a new narrative for the creek—a narrative that includes feelings of safety in the space.

Historical/Associative Meanings of the Site

Next, Osgood and I invited the group to explore the historical/associative meanings of the creek through performance of historical events and their own lived experiences of water. We put the students into groups of four and gave each person an index card and instructions for creating performances based on the Historical/Associative meanings of the space:

> On the index card, write down:
>
> A specific personal memory/story that this space reminds you of, something about the history of Waller Creek that you find interesting, something you have observed at the creek during your class observations, and something about the issues of Waller Creek that you find troubling.
>
> Create a short piece in the space that tells one of each thing: a personal memory, the history, and the issues about creek. This piece should contain no more than six lines of dialogue, at least one frozen image/tableaux (more if you want) and anything else you want to try. (Lesson plan notes, Oct. 17, 2010)

These instructions produced performance pieces that combined reenactments of historical events about the creek with participants' personal stories about water. There was one particular piece I still remember long after the workshop because it was an emotional and dramatic enactment combining a participant's personal story about almost drowning with the tragic events of the Waller Creek flood of 1915:

> The performance began with a participant crouched on the ground with four participants surrounding her in a circle. As she tried to stand, the other four would push her down while making 'whooshing' sounds. The piece ended with her on the ground covered with the bodies of the others. They were reenacting the experience of a person drowning in the Waller Creek flood of 1915, which Lynn had told us about. After the piece was over, the other participants said, 'Wow.' It

> was disturbing and yet beautiful to see participants embody the power and destruction of water. (Field notes, Oct 17, 2010)

Nicholson argues that in applied theatre, "autobiography often blends the fictional with the real, and over time life histories are rehearsed and become fictionalized" (66). By embodying one participant's personal narrative about nearly drowning with the story of the infamous flood at Waller Creek, these students moved beyond simple awareness of the history of the area or a retelling of the participant's story. Instead, they blurred the divisions between fiction and reality (Nicholson 66) to locate the places where the flood of 1915 and the events of this woman's life intersected. By combining events from the history of the creek with their own lived experiences around water, the participants enacted ways that their lives connected with the creek's history. Nicholson argues that applied theatre can demonstrate that "self and otherness are not in opposition or isolated from each other, but as narrative constructions, they are interrelated and mutually embedded" (66). This is relevant to "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project because the participants are asked to explore issues of both self and otherness—of their personal relationship to the creek as well as the city-wide concerns about the area.

As I stated earlier, Lewicka argues that knowing the history of a place can intensify place attachment, but probably only if the participant already has some level of emotional bond with the place (211). I studied the effects of the workshop on participants by analyzing my field notes, and studying the videos and transcriptions of the workshop performances and discussions for shifts in participants' relationship to and interest in the creek. If I conducted this study again, I would also measure the students' place attachment before and after the workshop to determine how the applied theatre work directly affected their attachment. Because these students were already spending a great deal of time in the space, I wondered if they were already somewhat bonded to the creek

area, or if they felt detached from it. As I did not study this specifically, it is difficult to know how the addition of devising of performances on the history of the creek affected their emotional attachment to it. What I did observe was that the performances made an impression on their collective memory. When I visited the class several weeks later, I held an informal focus group and asked the students which moments from our workshop were still "sticking" with them. The students mentioned this drowning scene and several other performance pieces several times. I wonder now, when these students revisit that spot along Waller Creek, if they think of their performances and how this affects their feelings about the area.

Imagining New Narratives

Since these students already had a relationship with Waller Creek prior to the workshop, Osgood and I remained interested in how they would react to a prompt that specifically asked them to imagine new narratives for the creek. We asked them to devise at least three different, new ways this section of Waller Creek could be used by the public in the future. We invited them to consider who/what would be there, who/what wouldn't be there, and what would have to happen for this activity to take place. One performance piece demonstrated how seeing live music, interacting with wildlife, and swimming could be possible at the creek:

> One group's piece begins with four students with their backs to us, cheering and jumping up and down. Peter Hall runs in front of them, stops, and waves. They squeal as he picks up a stick as uses it as a guitar. This seems to be a concert scene. He's really rocking out, and the 'fans' are going wild. They wave their arms back and forth to the 'music.' One reaches her hand out to him and yells, 'Touch my hand, touch my hand!' The group freezes with arms in the air and then switches into a movement sequence in which they mime synchronized swimming. They freeze again and one half of the group instantly moves around like ducks, while the other half feeds them. The piece ends with the 'wildlife' running away. (Notes from video, Oct 17, 2010)

The participants' performance indicated that they imagined people viewing live music, swimming, and interacting with wildlife at Waller Creek, all of which are activities not currently happening in or around the creek area. While the students could have developed these kinds of ideas on their own or through a different kind of design process, I observed that participating in theatre activities in and around the creek space offered students the time and opportunity to notice and articulate what kinds of activities a space like Waller Creek could potentially invite and support. In the post-workshop discussion with this group, one participant said, "It would be nice to know that there is a space that is welcoming to everyone…with rules that don't keep people away" (Video transcript Oct. 17, 2010). I left this workshop feeling excited that encouraging the public to interact with the space in creative ways—specifically through applied theatre and site-specific performance work—could be helpful to city planners in creating the kind of space that is indeed welcoming to everyone. While by the time of the study I did not see how the performance ideas ended up (or not) in the final results of their class design plans, this would be an interesting next step in my study.

WORKSHOP 4: CONNECTION TO PLACE THROUGH RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Our fourth workshop focused quite a bit on community building, and ultimately spoke to concerns that traditional participation methods often prove polarizing and do not always engage the public in productive, inclusive ways. Members of the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) add that:

> there is a lack of trust between government and citizens . . . government officials often don't see citizens as peers who, when given the opportunity, can talk reasonably together across partisan and other divides and come to agreement on elements of highly divisive issues. (NCDD Resource Center – Upgrading the Way We Do Politics)

As city planners work to make effective decisions about planning issues, participation methods can help level the playing field and foster dialogue between participants themselves, as well as between participants and planners.

In our fourth workshop with members of Austin Community Living—a community-based organization dedicated to exploring how Austinites can live more fully in community with each other—Osgood and I discovered that relationship building played a large role in what the participants' gained from the experience. The theatre games and site-specific devising activities we led worked to level the playing field between participants, most of whom had casually met a few times or had no previously established relationships with each other. The group was started in 2009 by a young, community-minded real estate agent named Rigel Thurston. When I met Thurston in fall 2010, ACL had been meeting monthly for coffee, presentations, and discussions about how to live more intentionally in community with each other and their neighbors in Austin. When I told Thurston about the "Ghosts of Waller Creek" project, he was excited not only to learn about Waller Creek, but also to see how this work could affect relationships within ACL. He wondered how it could help move this group of people into deeper personal and professional relationships with each other.

We invited the members of ACL to Waterloo Park for a Sunday afternoon workshop in early November. Like all of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" workshops, the first hour of the ACL workshop invited participants to learn theatre games and a simple performance vocabulary, which for this group ultimately prompted discussion about collaboration and leadership. I noted in my field journal how the twelve participants who came seemed nervous at first, but quickly warmed up as we began the activities:

> When people first arrived at Waterloo Park, they seemed friendly but a bit disconnected from each other. We began with a story circle, asking participants to

> tell us a memory about creeks or trails. As we played games and did performance exercises together, they laughed and smiled a lot. (Field Notes, Nov. 14, 2010)

After the warm-ups and performance exercises we took the participants down to the creek to devise performance pieces together. Devising theatre, also called collaborative creation, or play-building, is a "root activity of applied theatre practice and is a constant process of negotiated meaning-making" (Prendergast 18). Alison Oddey describes devising as:

> [A] process of making theatre that enables a group of performers to be physically and practically creative in the sharing and shaping of an original product that directly emanates from assembling, editing, and reshaping individuals' contradictory experiences of the world . . . Devising is about thinking, conceiving, and forming ideas, being imaginative and spontaneous, as well as planning. It is about inventing, adapting, and creating what you do as a group. (19)

By its nature, devising is collaborative, asking participants to use improvisation to democratically create different pieces of performance and negotiate how they are put together. Cooperation is necessary to make a devising process work. Similar to the other workshops, we asked the participants in this workshop to collaboratively create several different short pieces and perform them for each other using Sojourn's four lenses for considering a space.

One of the devising assignments asked the participants to consider the creek area's architecture as though it was a playground. The pieces created within this framing contained no words and proved abstract, mostly focused on movement and rhythm:

> Participants #1 and #2 are walking to the picnic table in rhythm. #2 takes a stick from the BBQ grill and starts a rhythm by banging on it. One by one, the people in the group join in. One of them is on the wall, walking back and forth, #1 has two pieces of wood, and she's clapping them together. We hear metallic and wooden sounds. Participant #3 is in the background with two sticks. #2 begins dancing with two blocks of wood. All of the audience is grinning! #3 climbs on the picnic table and dances while tapping two sticks together. It ends slowly, with #2 finally freezing in place. Everyone laughs.

> Me: Audience, what did you see? What did they do for us?
>
> Participant #4: They made a song.
>
> Participant #5: They did make a song.
>
> Participant #6: They also set the tone for the music that others could participate in. Once you establish the musical space, others can join.
>
> Me: Did anyone join in who wasn't a part of that group?
>
> (A few people nod.)
>
> Participant #5: We all did—(laughs)
>
> Participant #6: You couldn't hear me? I was going 'shh shh shh' (makes gesture with fingers, everyone laughs) (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

By explaining how they and others joined in during the musical piece, participants #5 and #6 indicated a desire to be a part of what was happening in the performance their fellow workshop participants created. Prior to the workshop most participants mentioned that they were unfamiliar with or had negative associations with Waller Creek. One of the criteria on Lewicka's place attachment scale is "I want to be involved in what is going on here" (Lewicka 229). I became interested in how their eagerness to be involved in each other's performances affected participants' feelings about the creek. After the performance I asked, "how did [performance creation] change your perception of the creek?"

> Participant #1: It felt more familiar. It stopped feeling like, 'Oh, well, this is a place I haven't been before…to 'oh, yeah, this is what we're doing with the thing' (gestures with arms back and forth). It became a tool.
>
> Participant #2: You could go places that were kind of outside the boundaries. You could go over there (gestures to rocks)…you didn't have to be like, okay, I have to stay on the sidewalk.
>
> Me: You mean the last assignment allowed you to do that?
>
> Participant #2: Yeah.

> Participant #3: This is—in the ten years that I've lived here, this is the first time I've been… (gestures to path along creek) down here, and it definitely sticks in my mind now. When I walk by here again, I'll be like, oh, I can go hang out there. (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

For Participant #1, creating a performance piece on the creek transformed the space from an unfamiliar place to a space where he was creating something, using the creek area "as a tool." For Participant #2, the exercise gave her permission to get off of the sidewalk and explore the spaces "outside the boundaries," which could be not only useful in attaching to the space, but in offering city planners data about creative, alternative ways of using the space. By saying that he now saw the space as a place where he was welcome to "hang out," Participant #3 suggests that he was starting to develop some feelings of ownership of it. Through the theatre work, these participants began forming new memories in the space, which for some, opened their minds to the possibility of returning to it again. By giving participants permission to physically engage with the site in unusual, creative ways, we invited them to be playful and free, and to form fun memories rooted in, or attached to, the space.

I also noticed that the games and site-specific performances exercises helped to build community among the participants. The participants moved from barely knowing each other's names at the beginning of the workshop to making quick devising decisions together by the end. I wondered how the participants' performance experiences and new relationships with each other affected their future interest in the creek, if at all. To investigate this question, I asked them, "What will you remember if you walk through this space again?"

> Participant: I think I'll remember being challenged to be creative with people. Yeah, I think that will stick in my mind…I think particularly the people who aren't theatre people, this is something that takes you out of your comfort zone. (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

By mentioning that he felt challenged to be creative with others in a way that he was not accustomed to, this participant implies that if he walks through Waller Creek again, he will remember the feeling of community and creative collaboration he felt that day. Osgood and I wondered how we could use the same types of applied theatre/performance exercises to create collaboration and community between city planners and stakeholders and between various stakeholders in a city planning issue—groups who normally might feel pitted against each other in terms of needs and goals. When we asked participants what they thought about this idea, one participant referenced flocking (Rohd). Flocking is a performance/movement exercise in which participants take turns leading and following, as a metaphor for considering trust and respect in a planning context. This participant believed that flocking had been a very useful exercise in helping their group create community:

> It felt like it was a very mutually respectful exercise, because of the exchange of the rotation of leadership and following. And so that feeling of respect could go a long ways in helping stakeholders with a consensus decision, if they develop respect and trust for each other. (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

As this participant states, having a feeling of trust and mutual respect among stakeholders proves helpful in trying to move to a consensus about a decision that affects all of them. He indicates that doing the flocking exercise with stakeholders could model that type of interaction. Another participant added that the childlike, playful nature of the performance exercises disarmed the participants and helped them trust each other:

> You have a base level of trust that the other participants are trying to do the right thing. You're not likely to dismiss. You believe in their basic goodness and it makes you more willing to listen and compromise and work together. Because you see them as a human being as opposed to an obstacle. You see them as basically on your team. We were all open to doing these kind of childlike or simple activities together. We weren't self-conscious. When you play with someone in a non-competitive way, you can let down some of your defenses. It was disarming. (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

By saying that the performance work helped him see the other participants as being on his same team, this participant highlights the fact that when people can learn to laugh and play together, they see a different side of each other that they usually. If people from opposing groups (in terms of city planning issues) play games and create performance pieces together, they form a bond. It is much more difficult for people to yell at each other in a meeting if they have just finished making a beautiful performance piece together. As this participant offers, the performance work can be a very useful tool in getting people in opposition to see each other as human beings rather than obstacles, and begin to hear each other's opinions. One participant added to this discussion by giving a comparison between her experiences in working with others in traditional methods of participation in planning versus what she experienced in the applied theatre workshop.

> I think that the relationship building part of it is really important. And as I think about using these theatre techniques for planning, I think about the other planning workshops I've been to, and occasionally I've had to work in a team, but not in a very creative setting. Where we're making a lot of decisions about numbers, and maps and things like that. And in this situation we worked as a team, but we worked very creatively, and we built trust with each other, and we had fun. (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

This participant noted that though she had previously worked with a collaborative team in planning workshops, having fun, as well as the creative interaction and trust-building made a difference in her relationships with this group. She added that the relationships she formed at this workshop had a different, if not more substantial, impact on her:

> And I do remember the relationships I established in one or two hours at other planning meetings, and I've kept in touch with a couple of those people. But I feel like (gestures to group) we've really shared something more here today. And when I'm thinking about what I'll remember when I come back here, I'll remember you all. And I would also go tell my friends, 'These are really fun meetings, you guys should go!' (group laughter) But this is really fun, and I think a lot of people would enjoy getting out of their comfort zones and having a

> different kind of experience like we had. Now we have Waller Creek friends, right? (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

This excerpt speaks to the fact that participants often find applied theatre work fun, and that it can build relationships and inspire inclusion of even more constituents as participants invite others to participate with them. Robert Alexander, founder of Washington, DC's Living Stage Theatre Company adds that this type of creative work can help people become the best version of themselves:

> Every human being is an artist and in the moment of creation, we are at our most sane, most healthy, and most fulfilled. When we share a piece of our vision of the world with others, we are better able to see ourselves, to interact with others, and to make our choices. (qtd. in Rohd xix)

In acknowledging the feelings of excitement she had while creating with others during the workshop, this participant suggests that she will associate this space with those particular people, and plans to seek out collaboration or connection with them in the future.

Several participants also mentioned that they felt the devising work put participants on the same level of power as each other, disrupting hierarchies between people of different ages, genders, and occupations. Osgood wondered how our work could be used to change existing power dynamics between citizens and planners. She asked the group how they would respond to the idea of city planners participating with them side-by-side in the workshops:

> Lynn: So would you want planners to partake in that imaginative work? Being there, experientially, listening to the sounds, finding the sticks, coming up with the story ideas, that type of thing?
>
> Participant #1: The decision-makers—
>
> Lynn: Yes, the decision-makers.
>
> Participant #1: Yes.

> Participant #2: Yeah… because it levels the playing field, and then they meet each other on a level playing field, instead of this like, (gestures with hands at different levels).
>
> Me: So you think Bippity Bippity Bop [a theatre warm-up game] could change city planning? (group laughter)
>
> Participant #2: It could change the WORLD! (much laughter) (Video transcript, Nov. 14, 2010)

Here Participants #1 and #2 agree with Osgood that the "imaginative work" of listening, coming up with stories, and creating performance could "level the playing field" between the public and planners. Though her comment, "It could change the world!" was spoken in jest, it recalls Freire's call to disrupt oppressive power structures in the world (73), and invites me to reflect on the value of, and possibilities around, using the applied theatre and site-specific performance work to address how power is often unevenly situated between the public and decision-makers in city planning.

RESULTS

In this chapter I studied how applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops and events can be used as methods for fostering place attachment and engaging citizens in a city planning process. Now at the end of this process, I believe that applied theatre and site-specific performance offered some productive outcomes related to Waller Creek and city planning. We worked to activate public participation in a city planning process by offering participants a chance to create together and dialogue with each other about Waller Creek and about city planning in general. The theatre games and devising exercises worked to build relationships among participants, and engaged them in early stages of a city planning process through playful, active, inclusive, interactive, collaborative methods. Since this city planning issue concerned the downtown area

surrounding Waller Creek, a particular place in Austin, adding site-specific performance exercises to our applied theatre process offered participants the opportunity to develop new relationships with the area and to imagine ways they might like to use the space in the future. Being outside at the actual site of redevelopment, rather than in the classroom or at a different part of the creek, proved important for helping participants engage with the current redevelopment issues at Waller Creek. The workshops affected participants' knowledge and awareness of the creek and for some, also developed their sense of ownership and relationship to the area. The workshops not only helped participants understand the historical and current stories of the creek, but also helped them create their own stories. Participants formed new memories in a space with which they were previously unfamiliar, a first step in becoming interested in and/or attached to that place. Developing their own relationship with Waller Creek and thinking of possibilities for their future use of this space have great potential for serving planners and designers who desire the public's informed feedback about public spaces.

These four workshops also left me with some questions and concerns about the methods I used for the study. In this iteration of the project, we did not measure participants' place attachment to the creek. In a future study, Lewicka's place attachment scale could offer us more information about why and how the participants felt attached to the creek. But is information about participant place attachment useful for decision-makers? If not, what information would be more helpful to them? Also, while it seemed that the workshops gave participants the opportunity to imagine new narratives for the space, I am left wondering how we could connect this kind of project more directly with the current plans and process being implemented by the city. I am interested to know more about how applied theatre can invite participants to be even more directly involved with the Waller Creek project and in city planning in general.

In the next chapter, I discuss the role of the artifact in an applied theatre process and how to archive and communicate information generated through the workshops to city planners, as well as future participants. Tapping into questions around process and product, I examine what types of artifacts are useful to and needed by city planners, and I explore the idea of creating an interactive performative artifact.

Chapter Four: The Role of Artifact in an Applied Theatre Process

> "There is a growing appetite among citizens to do more than watch.
> This is cause for optimism, because the vitality of the arts in a democracy, like the vitality of democracy itself,
> rests on the participation of not just a few, but many."
> –Dudley Cocke, "Art in a democracy"
>
> "Beyond storytellers, we are witnesses."
> —Della Pollock, Remembering

In the previous chapter, I argued that applied theatre and site-specific performance offered embodied tools for fostering interest and participation in city planning activities at Waller Creek. The workshops helped build relationships among participants, as well as a way for them to explore design possibilities for the creek area. In this chapter, I explore the role of artifacts in extending an applied theatre process beyond its core group of participants. In creative drama contexts, the term "artifact" is used to describe a physical object specifically employed to engage or hook participants in drama activities and "prompt inquiry or discussion" (Grady, Dawson, and Lee). Merriam-Webster defines artifact as "something created by humans for a practical purpose" ("Artifact" def. 1a), or "something characteristic of or resulting from a particular human institution, period, trend, or individual" ("Artifact" def. 1b). Here I combine parts of all three of these meanings, defining artifact as a performative, interactive product designed to communicate, and prompt inquiry around, the intention and use value of the applied theatre work. First, I discuss my initial beliefs about the importance of creating an artifact of and through the "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program in an effort to reach city planners and other members of the general public. I examine how our workshops and

performances produced information that is both different from and complementary to the data that city planners tend to collect through traditional public participation methods. I explore how interactive, performative artifacts, such as audio maps and live, site-specific performances, can further bridge practical concerns around collaborations between the fields of applied theatre and city planning, as well as honor participants' voices in the city planning process. Finally, I discuss the challenges of creating artifacts that dance between what Diana Taylor, author of *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, refers to as the archive and the repertoire—artifacts that specifically use the language and mediums of city planning to convey the participants' experience of an ephemeral, embodied process such as performance, as well as communicating data gathered from the applied program.

ROLE OF AN ARTIFACT

Applied theatre by its nature proves interdisciplinary, crossing over into areas as diverse as psychology, medicine, prison studies, education, and many others (Nicholson 28). In both applied theatre and the fields to which it is applied, a difference in vocabulary and approach exists that practitioners must negotiate at all stages of a project. At the beginning of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project I wanted to develop an artifact, or a tangible product that communicates the "remains" of a performance project or work, and would speak the language of both applied theatre artists and city planners, as well as honor and communicate the point of view of participants to others. I wondered what would remain after our project ended and what kind of concrete artifact could ultimately connect both of these worlds.

From my previous experience with applied theatre projects, I knew the difficulty of communicating the value and results of process-based performance work to people who have not experienced it firsthand, such as funders and future stakeholders. Following a workshop or series of workshops, public performance remains the most common artifact used by applied theatre artists to share their work with a greater public. Applied theatre scholar Christine Bailey suggests that for audiences who are informed about the process,

> the seeming banality (at times), of [applied theatre] presentations is minimized because the audience is sympathetic to both the presentations and their sub-texts…an interaction takes place between performer and spectator that is an intergral part of the process…[and] for those involved, it is an aesthetic experience. (qtd. in Prendergast and Saxton 192)

Unfortunately, in some cases, audiences who do not understand the context in which a piece was created may find the piece confusing—or even worse, off-putting. For example, Prendergast and Saxton describe an applied project in which a group of Canadian women created a play from their experiences of domestic violence. While the experience of creating the piece was very powerful for the women personally, when they were persuaded to perform at a scholarly conference, the audience had trouble enjoying it:

> They had difficulty hearing the actors, the acting was unskilled and the production values completely absent. They saw the presentation as raw and unframed; they were confronted with a theatre experience they did not recognize and the subject matter was presented without the distancing devices of traditional production, leaving the audience with no idea of how to respond. (Prendergast and Saxton 192)

This experience is similar to some applied theatre performances I have both witnessed and facilitated. While performances can be impactful experiences for both participants and audience members, if the audience has little or no connection to the individuals

performing or to the subject matter at hand, they may find the productions confusing, or lacking the aesthetics and quality of a more traditional (or professional) theatre piece. Because applied theatre programs are usually focused on the experience of the participants—often non-professional or non-self-declared artists, the aesthetics and quality of applied theatre performances are sometimes given less attention. Most applied theatre performances simply present participants' personal ideas, experiences, and stories in a public space rather than creating a highly produced piece of theatre designed for a wider, outside audience. Scholar Shannon Jackson argues that the value of the performance is the '"liveness' of the event, the emotional resources it can offer, the dialogues that can be generated [either within or after the performance] and the complexity of texture that defies easy closure" (qtd. in Prendergast and Saxton 192).

Other common artifacts from an applied theatre process include scripts of performance pieces or a DVD of a workshop or performance. Written scripts, while helpful in documenting the words written by participants, cannot convey the way in which they were embodied or spoken by the particular group that created them. They cannot show a reader the participants' faces or help them hear their voices. DVD recordings, even if shot professionally on high-quality equipment (which they most often are not), put the audience one step further away from the live-ness of theatre and the process-based experience. They can be even more distancing from the original intent of the work because the audience cannot see the performance up close and has no chance to interacting with the practitioners, participants, or other audience members at all. Other artifacts might include participant journals, writing, and artwork, or photographs, audio recordings, and interviews from throughout the devising process. With most of these products, as with the other artifacts, viewers not involved in the project themselves may find it difficult to value or make sense of what they're seeing without access to contexts

in which the pieces were developed. The full meaning of the work can be lost to a viewer who is not personally connected to the content or present for the duration of the work's development.

No matter what kind of artifact the applied theatre practitioner creates, for better or worse, it becomes the mediator of the applied theatre work between its creators and its audience. It communicates the content, focus, and objectives of the program to people on the outside of the process. In the field of performance studies, scholars such as Diana Taylor explore how performance is archive and later accessed. In a future study, I would further examine the notion of a performative artifact that might draw on and contribute to both the archive and the repertoire—the more traditional, text-based remains *and* the ephemeral, embodied, and gestured remains from "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" (D. Taylor, Kershaw and Nicholson). In calling for a performative artifact that doesn't simply replicate the performance but draws on it and the meanings made, I wanted to consider a new kind of artifact—one that is both a traditional document of information for planning and simultaneously communicates the emotion and experience from the workshops. According to Osgood, many city planners think of arts-based work as "icing on a cake," something fun that simply decorates other, more substantial city planning processes. Therefore, it was important for me to consider carefully how we communicated the experience and value of our applied theatre project to planners, other applied artists, and other citizens of Austin. For this project, I wanted to develop artifacts that foregrounded how applied theatre programs could add inclusion, collaboration, and creativity to existing processes for planning. I hoped to do this by showing how our work could generate different and/or complementary information about what participants thought about the future of Waller Creek. Before exploring different types of artifacts that would prove relevant to city planning and our applied performance process, I wanted to examine

the information generated during the workshops and decide what to convey to city planners.

DATA FROM APPLIED THEATRE WORKSHOPS

Applied theatre and site-specific performance workshops can add important, different, and complementary data to that which already exists through traditional, and often legally-required, public participation methods. Innes and Booher contend that traditional processes gather information from the public through surveys, public hearings, citizen advisory boards, and written comments on proposed projects. These processes often happen some time after plans have been developed and tend to be "formalistic, one-way communication from members of the public to the agency or elected officials" (423). The applied theatre is not a replacement for, but rather a deepening of these existing participation and data-gathering methods. The collaborative, interactive performance process we developed and facilitated for "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project produced several types of data related to city planning that we found different from and/or complementary to more traditional, less inclusive, one-way participation methods.

Our program seemed to help participants become aware of and connect with city planning issues at Waller Creek. We gathered data about the creek from people who are not always inclined to participate in planning conversations. Applied theatre often intentionally engages marginalized or underrepresented populations (Nicholson 11), and in some ways, this parallels our efforts to move beyond engaging elite citizens who regularly have time to participate in city planning and reach out to everyday people who had never or rarely participated in city planning before. This project also produced design ideas gathered directly from the site through applied theatre and site-specific performance

exercises. Our process invited the public to re-envision the site, and offer opinions, new possibilities, and solutions for its problems, while in the process of physically interacting with the space. We gathered data from workshop participants who had a role that was proactive and in dialogue with other citizens, rather than reactionary. This differs from traditional participation methods in which planners often present already-formed ideas and ask for feedback. Our program allowed participants the opportunity to hear each other's opinions and ideas about Waller Creek before decisions were made. While these achievements alone would be an acceptable end goal in most instances of applied theatre, I envision this work going a step further. I believe its full impact cannot be realized without a way to bridge communication between the workshop participants and the city planners themselves. Finding ways to use artifacts to invite interest and participation from other members of the public is also important. Next, I explore the need for creating artifacts that can communicate and translate this data in a dialogic and interactive way to city planners as well as future stakeholders.

COMMUNICATING DATA THROUGH INTERACTIVE ARTIFACTS

Both traditional theatre and applied theatre practitioners have a need to produce a lasting artifact of their work, whether for archival purposes, grant applications, or promoting their work. For the applied theatre practitioner, creating an artifact is often related to the desire to move the relevance of the work beyond the participants in the process in hopes that the work will promote social change (Nicholson 13). To this end, we worked to create artifacts of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program that could act as creative, dialogic, interactive extensions of the applied theatre work as well as speak some of the language of city planning.

As I considered possible ideas for artifacts, I consulted with Osgood about what types of artifacts planners already engage with in traditional city planning processes around public space. She offered an example of a public participation activity that might occur at a community engagement meeting:

> Planners ask the group to brainstorm value statements for the area and write each of the statements on a board in front of the group. They give each group member a certain number of stickers and ask them to place the stickers next to the statements they value most. Afterwards planners look at this board and say, 'Well, there are seven stickers next to X statement, and only two next to Y statement, so apparently the public values X more.' (Personal interview, May 10, 2011)

In this example of a traditional public participation method, participants form values and opinions separate from the actual space in question. The participant indicates her interest by placing a sticker on a board rather than stating her opinion. This activity also shows planners' inclination toward artifacts that communicate the public's opinions in both a textual and visual way. While I suspected that artifacts such as edited transcripts of workshop discussions and results from pre- and post-workshop surveys could prove useful to planners, those artifacts missed the embodied, site-specific nature of the work. I wanted to honor participants' voices and highlight the fact that they were located at and in dialogue with the creek when they shared comments and developed opinions about the area. I hoped to develop and use visual, textual, and auditory artifacts from "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project to demonstrate or represent the experience of our participants to city planners and future citizen stakeholders. I wanted to persuade decision-makers of the value of our work and the specific data it could offer as a first step in integrating the arts into public participation methods in city planning.

Audio Mapping as Artifact

At the beginning of the project, Osgood and I planned to communicate information about the workshops to planners through interactive, online, and physical audio maps. Since maps are a major part of the language of planners, we felt they would be an effective medium for conveying the workshops participants' ideas about how Waller Creek could be used. I am trained in oral history and audio documentary production and had recently helped create an online audio map for another project, so I was interested in the possibilities for integrating the voices of our participants into a map. I felt that hearing participants' voices as a story rather than just seeing them as text would add a personal touch to their words, make it more interesting, and connect the listener with the speakers' lived experiences.

The original idea was to create a clickable online map of Waller Creek with the voices of workshop participants embedded in the map as audio clips.[1] We also planned to include transcriptions of participants' comments on the website for people who prefer to read rather than listen. City planners and members of the public could visit the website, click on a particular part of Waller Creek and hear and/or read participants' thoughts, ideas, and opinions about the redevelopment at that exact part of the creek. For example, a user of this map could click on a picture of a section of the Waller Creek and hear a participant say "I would like to see more landscaping in this area of the creek because right now the tree branches are so overgrown that no one can see me when I'm down here. This makes me feel unsafe." I hoped this map could offer planners information about what the public would like to see at very specific parts of the creek, and that

[1] I was inspired to create an online map after working in 2009-10 as an interviewer/curator for Mapping Desire @UT, an online mapping project that began as a collaboration between UT Austin students and the Blanton Museum of Art. Mapping Desire included audio interview excerpts of stories of sites of physical desire on or near the UT campus. Mapping Desire is located at http://www.utexas.edu/cofa/mappingdesire/.

members of the public would visit the website to learn more about Waller Creek and how they could get involved with the redevelopment plans. Ultimately the process of creating an online audio map proved too time-consuming for the scope of this study. However, I continued to believe that audio maps have the potential to communicate information about an applied theatre process to city planners and to the public.

Given the time and resources afforded to this pilot study, I decided to explore what an audio map, created on a smaller scale, might suggest about the role of artifacts in an applied theatre/city planning process. Rather than archive elements of our project in an online map, Osgood and I worked to create a physical audio map. Osgood printed out a large, two-dimensional map of Waller Creek and I ordered twenty recordable sound modules from a website that specialized in recordable greeting cards. The sound modules were 4-1/2 by 2-1/2 inches in dimension, and could record up to 30 seconds each. To record to the modules, the user presses a red button and speaks into a microphone. To replay the module, the user presses a black button. The modules have an adhesive on the back that allows them to be attached to a card or other surface. Osgood and I planned to end the last two workshops we conducted with a mapping ritual. As with the online map, we would invite participants to record their thoughts about what should happen with a specific part of Waller Creek onto a sound module, and then ask them to place their module on the part of the map that corresponded with their comment. We would play the recordings one at a time and then all at once to hear the voices of the participants' as a whole. Following the workshops, we wanted to give the maps directly to city planners to display and interact with. We wanted to transcribe the recordings and give them to planners, and/or display them publicly as well. Though time did not ultimately allow us to experiment with the physical audio maps either, I believe that both online and physical audio maps, as artifacts, offer a great deal of potential, as well as challenges, for

communicating information from applied theatre project such as "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" to planners and future stakeholders.

Maps are a familiar medium for both planners and many members of the public, and could work well as a way to find common vocabulary between the applied theatre work and city planners and the public. Audio maps can offer stories and personalized voiceovers of people at the actual site of redevelopment, bringing the site work directly (and personally) into the planning space. These maps could be used later for art installations and public displays that could serve important purposes in later stages of the Waller Creek planning process. They could help planning consultants create more dynamic public engagement activities as well as spark the public's interest in being involved in decision-making regarding the creek.

While I am excited about the potentials of audio mapping as an artifact of an applied theatre project, this kind of map would also present some particular challenges. I know from my previous experiences that creating an online audio map is a very time-consuming and labor-intensive task. Producing an audio map requires a computer programmer, graphic/web designer, interviewers, audio editors, and transcriptionists. If photos and videos were to be included, we would have to shoot and edit those as well. Furthermore, developing this kind of artifact requires access to high quality audio/video recording equipment and web space to hold the data. Creating paper maps would prove difficult in other ways. Large maps are printed on special printers to which only people involved in design or planning have access. Sound modules are expensive and their use requires some explanation and care to ensure that they do not get damaged or erased. In order to create either online or paper audio maps, facilitators need to consider what kinds of questions to ask participants in order to communicate what they experienced in the applied theatre workshops through this format. Most importantly, applied theatre

facilitators must present the maps to city planners and members of the public in a way that gives them ample time and opportunity to listen and respond to them. If facilitators are unable to overcome these challenges, others may find it difficult to understand the information contained in the maps.

Despite their challenges, I imagine that both online and paper map artifacts could act as a performative and informative medium for translating information from participatory, applied theatre workshops into a format that could be useful to city planners. Beyond reaching city planners, the maps could also be extensions of the applied theatre project, inviting interest in the Waller Creek redevelopment plans from other members of the public. For example, I envision ever-evolving story maps that change and develop as the redevelopment project moves forward. These could include paper map displays in libraries, post offices, and other city buildings that include the pictures and voices of people who have used, currently use, and plan to use Waller Creek. I imagine interviewing people who used to live along the creek, the engineers of the Waller Creek Tunnel Project, and homeless men who live in the area. The maps would reflect their stories, thoughts, and opinions about the redevelopment and how it affects them. I picture an online map that anyone could access from the City of Austin Waller Creek homepage. This map would include all the above content as well as videos, photos, and audio of applied theatre workshops to show the possibilities for playful, collaborative activities at the creek. In these ways future iterations of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project could work to include people who did not attend an applied theatre workshop or city public participation event.

Interactive Performance Piece as Artifact

Osgood and I also imagined another possible artifact for our project—an original, devised, 20-minute, interactive performance piece about Waller Creek. While I knew from previous projects that performance presents limitations as a representation of process-based work (such as our workshops at Waller Creek), I wanted to explore the possibilities of a short, interactive event as an artifact that could interest the public's involvement with the redevelopment at Waller Creek. I also wondered how former workshop participants would create a performance-based artifact of what they had experienced in their three-hour workshop for an outside audience. What would they see as valuable and memorable from their experience? What would they see as next steps in developing their performances? What would they want to communicate to others about Waller Creek?

Working toward this artifact, I created a performance piece with UT Austin junior design students who were studying the creek and attended the third "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" workshop in October 2010. The audience for the piece included 12 UT Austin undergraduate and graduate theatre students and faculty. As the creative team, the design students and I agreed that our audience should have opportunities to participate in, as well as watch, the performance. The students on the creative team felt the interactive nature of the workshop was one of the most fun and valuable parts of it for them, and they wanted the audience to experience that as well.

In a brief rehearsal process, the creative team devised interactive performance stations about Waller Creek's history, current state, and future redevelopment. We used their favorite moments of performance from the workshop as starting points for creating the stations. For example, the first station was inspired by a movement piece from the workshop in which a woman drowned in the creek waters. For the performance station,

the students gave each audience member paper and markers and asked them to draw their dream home. While they did this, two of the students told the story of great Waller Creek flood of 1915 in which many Victorian homes were lost and 35 people drowned. Other students created the sounds of the storm by shaking a thunder sheet and making "whooshing" sounds with their mouths. At the end of the story the students sprayed the audience members' pictures with water to ruin them. The students explained that after this flood, the area had gone from being the center of town to becoming the abandoned, neglected space it is today. There were also stations that explored Urban Renewal in the 1960-70s, the 1976 development of the Waller Creek area for the Bicentennial, the current homelessness in the area, the engineering behind the Waller Creek Tunnel Project, and the city's future redevelopment plans (Field notes, Nov. 22, 2010).

This interactive performance functioned as an artifact in both successful and challenging ways. As an artifact of the students' experience of the October workshop, the performance was not a complete replication of the workshop, nor did I think it should be. It highlighted the most dramatic parts of the history of the creek, including stories such as the flood and the destruction of homes along the creek during Urban Renewal. The performance also focused on the moments the students had found most memorable from their workshop in terms of movement, humor, or sound. Due to time constraints, it did not include all the pieces the students had created in the workshop, nor their discussions about the space and how their perception of the creek had changed because of the theatre work. As an artifact, I don't believe it is necessary for the performance to hold all of those elements. In a devising process, directors must make decisions about what to include and it is important to choose elements that will best hold an audience's attention and dramaturgically create an overall engaging experiences. I also wanted the audience to

have the opportunity to make their own discoveries about the area for themselves, rather than being told what to think.

As an artifact created to interest the audience in Waller Creek, the performance piece offered an interactive overview of the rich history and current state of the area. The performance conveyed a lot of information about the situation at the creek through quick, memorable storytelling. Audience members seemed engaged throughout the entire piece, participating in activities such as drawing their dream homes, helping the performers create a rhythm piece with rocks, and using their bodies to help demonstrate the Waller Creek Tunnel project. They asked a lot of questions about our process during the post-show discussion as well (Field notes, Nov. 22, 2010). The performance piece seemed to offer the audience a fun, interactive way to learn more about the creek's history and current city planning issues.

As an artifact designed to encourage audiences to participate in future decisions about the redevelopment of the area, the piece proved less successful. Post-show survey results indicated that the performance piece did not necessarily affect the audience's interest in being involved at the creek. To the question, "Have you ever participated in a city planning process, all of the respondents said "no." Next I asked, "Would you be interested in participating in a city planning process regarding Waller Creek in the future?" While only four audience members answered this question, their responses revealed their uncertainty:

a. No, I am just too busy.
b. Maybe. I'm not sure if I know enough about it to form an informed decision.
c. Possibly.
d. I'm not entirely sure what that means, but I'm always willing to participate in events like you prepared and discuss the area.

(Participant surveys, Nov. 29, 2010)

The first audience member's response indicates that it would difficult for her to find time to participate beyond attending the performance. The second, third, and fourth audience members felt unsure if they'd like to participate in the future, suggesting that perhaps the performance piece did not give audience members enough information about what a city planning process was or how and why they could and should get involved with it. Moving from viewing a 20-minute performance piece to being involved in city government is a major step for most people. Some people may find it confusing and intimidating to participate. If we did this performance piece again, I would add a discussion about citizen involvement, and offer the audience specific ways that they could get involved with the Waller Creek project. My desire to add a discussion to the performance piece suggests that applied theatre practitioners have an interest in using an artifact to promote dialogue and further action from audience members; sometimes artifacts cannot stand on their own. Practitioners may need to situate artifacts within the context in which they were created and offer ways for audiences to ask and respond to questions about the artifact.

Tangible artifacts played a role during the performance piece as well. Since we had not been able to use the recordable sound modules for the audio maps, I decided to experiment with using them to create audio artifacts at the end of the performance piece, inviting the audience to record their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the creek and what they would like to do there in the future. The audio artifact also served as a way of reminding the audience that they have a voice in city planning. In the final moments of the performance piece, each performer used a sound module to record an audience member answering the question, "What would you like to do at Waller Creek?" After all the sound modules were recorded, the audience and performers stood under an echo-y bridge and the performers played the modules in unison. Facilitating this work with the

sound modules was an attempt to create a theatrical ritual that would remind the audience that they have a voice at Waller Creek and in Austin's city planning in general. I hoped that hearing their voices out in the space would reinforce the idea that they can influence the future of the creek.

In practice, this artifact exercise revealed logistical challenges. The audience was confused about what they were supposed to do during this moment, and the speakers on the sound modules needed more amplification to be heard clearly. But in a post-show discussion, audience members agreed that though the modules were difficult to hear, this idea had potential to be a memorable theatrical moment. If I tried this again, I would work more with the creative team to rehearse that moment and find ways to amplify the sound modules. I would also survey the audience afterwards to investigate how it affected their feelings about the creek.

Despite some of the challenges, I continue to be drawn to the idea of experimenting with audio artifacts as a way of making an applied theatre process relevant to people outside of the participant group: including not only city planners, but also everyday residents of the city. I am curious to explore what a public and/or online display of maps, sound clips, performance photos, and descriptions of workshops and performances offers as a way of conveying information about our process, specifically the audience and performers' thoughts, to city planners and other stakeholders in the creek. I am also interested in examining how the act of recording participants' words can help them feel included and heard in a city planning process. In the field of oral history, the presence of the audio recorder in an interview creates a heightened moment for the interviewee, representing an invisible audience who will hear the person's voice at a later time (Pollock). Turning participants' words into a performative artifact such as an audio map is a way of making sure they will be remembered. Performance studies scholar Della

Pollock believes that the performance of interviews "is not so much an interesting or entertaining option as an obligation. At its most basic level re-performance is an expression of devoted reception" (4). Taking the time to listen to a participant indicates that the listener cares about what the person has to say. Pollock adds that "through the incorporation of oral histories into public memory, it may most fundamentally ensure that those who have given up their time to talk, know that their words have been taken seriously" (1). In other words, the act of listening to a workshop participant and recording her voice at Waller Creek endows her words with meaning. Taking it a step further by including her words in an audio map ensures that her perspective is incorporated into public memory in ways that may make a difference in the future. In the field of city planning, where many do not feel included, finding ways for the public to feel their opinions matter and will be communicated to decision-makers is an important contradiction.

In addition to imagining how artifacts might communicate information to planners and future stakeholders and actively value participants' voice, I also explored the value of leaving audience members with an artifact of the creek itself as a way of reminding them of the experience. In the last moments of the performance piece, the students gave each audience member a small jar containing Waller Creek water, and colorful rocks, leaves, berries and twigs. As each jar was presented, a student said, "Thank you for being a part of Waller Creek." The audience members paid attention to the jars of creek water, holding them up to the light, and smiling while they showed them to each other. This moment immediately followed the recording of the sound modules, thus setting up a reciprocal exchange of artifact: the audience offered us their voices for our sound modules, and in return, we sent them home with a bit of the creek. When I originally brought up this idea, the design students had thought the audience might find the jars

dirty and unpleasant because the Waller Creek water is quite murky. But when I asked audience members a week later what moments from the performance still stood out for them, it was nearly unanimous: "The gift you gave us at the end" (Field notes, Nov. 30, 2010). This suggests that when the audience members look at their jars later, they may remember moments from the performance they had participated in at Waller Creek. If they visit the creek again, read an article about it online, or hear about it in conversation, they will now be able to say, "Yes, I know something about that place." But later I wondered, could (and should) our gift of performance and creek water inspire participants to be more involved at Waller Creek and/or in city planning? Nicholson uses gift theory as a metaphor for examining equity and social participation in applied theatre. She asks,

> What do we as practitioners, expect in return for our labor? … Do we ask participants to adopt new ways of thinking or different political values? Do we expect them to change their behavior in particular ways? In turn, how far might our own perspectives alter as a result of the work? None of these questions can be answered glibly. (Nicholson 161)

While coming to the performance piece and taking this artifact home is not a guarantee of their future participation in city planning issues, the project provided an opportunity for audience members to form specific memories and opinions of Waller Creek that they would not have had otherwise. Having personal memories and feelings about the creek is a first of many steps in helping participants understand and care about the area. Nicholson acknowledges that the gift of applied theatre is complex in terms of ethics, risks, and intentions. She calls for practitioners to "renew a commitment to openness, in which [they] recognize that their role is not to *give* participants a voice … but to create spaces and places that enable the participants' voices to be heard" (Nicholson 163). While the interactive performance piece did not call for participants to change their

behavior in a specific way, I had hoped it would plant a seed in their minds about future participation in city planning. As I reflect back now, I realize that perhaps the role of this part of the project was not to transform the participants into active citizens. It was simply to offer information about the creek in a performative, interactive way, and provide a space for participants' dialogue about the issues to be heard. This action itself constitutes a direct contradiction to the one-way and reactive communication methods in traditional public participation.

In conclusion, I believe that creating interactive artifacts that communicate and translate an applied theatre process to planners *and* future stakeholders is an idea that invites further study. In exploring the idea of audio maps, I learned that the process of making one could offer a way for planners to interact with the voices and opinions of participants who spent time at the creek. Interacting with the public's voices could help planners understand more about how the public would like the Waller Creek area to be developed. The process of creating the maps, as well as the maps themselves, could also serve as a way to interest other members of the public in participating in planning events at the creek. In creating a pilot version of an interactive performance as an artifact of a workshop, I learned that performance serves as a quick, fun way to share a lot of historical and current information about a site with an audience. Creating the performance piece with former workshop participants gave them an opportunity to create a more formal artifact of their workshop experience. I also realized that the audience needs more information about how to get involved in order to consider their future participation in planning issues; the artifact ends up needing to meet multiple criteria—including high entertainment and educational values. I believe that the act of creating audio artifacts of audience members' voices archives their thoughts and demonstrates that what they think matters to others. As with the audio maps, it offers a way to share their

thoughts about the creek with planners and reinforces the dialogic possibilities for city planning. And finally, offering the audience an artifact to take home at the end of the performance served as a reminder that in some small way, the audience, too, are now a part of Waller Creek.

Though they have a lot to offer as artifacts, both audio maps and interactive performance offer challenges and limitations. No artifact can substitute for a process-based experience such as an applied theatre workshop. However, a well-developed performance piece can give a viewer a window into the intended participant experience and share information about the content of the workshops. An audio map can also communicate information about the thoughts and opinions of participants following a workshop. On the other hand, producing interactive artifacts like these requires a great deal of time, effort, expertise, and funding. Just as I experimented with and revised the process-based parts of the workshops, I would need time to workshop and experiment with creating the products or artifacts of the workshops as well. Though there are challenges, I believe that these types of artifacts could have the power to create interest in Waller Creek as well as facilitate dialogue between planners and participants.

In this chapter, I discussed the role and importance of artifacts in an applied theatre process. I examined how the "Ghosts of Waller Creek" program produced data that is different from and complementary to the data produced in traditional participation processes. I explored possibilities for working towards the creation of interactive artifacts such as audio maps and performance to communicate information about the applied theatre program to planners and other stakeholders. In the fifth and final chapter, as I reflect on my work's intersections with both the field of Art and Civic Dialogue and my original social change goals, I isolate several guidelines and considerations for the future development of applied theatre work in a city planning context. Finally, I invite applied

theatre practitioners and other theatre artists to communicate and translate the value of their work to non-theatre artists.

Chapter Five: The Future Ghosts of Waller Creek

> "Begin with art, because art tries to take us outside ourselves. It is a matter of trying to create an atmosphere and context so conversation can flow back and forth and we can be influenced by each other." —W.E.B. DuBois, qtd. in "INROADS"

As I reflect on the processes and products of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program, I am left with questions: Where does this project go from here? What would improve it? At what point in a city planning process is applied theatre most useful? What kind of role should this work play in the public participation process for Waller Creek? How should I approach future partnerships with the City of Austin and other organizations? Potential answers to some of these questions came in April 2011 when the new Waller Creek Conservancy and the City of Austin announced a public-private partnership with the goal of creating and implementing a new master plan for the land that encompasses and surrounds Waller Creek.

The Waller Creek Conservancy is a nonprofit organization formed by three Austin business and philanthropic leaders. According to their website, the Conservancy

> will remain in close contact with the City to enact policies that support the implementation of that plan while simultaneously launching an aggressive fundraising plan to finance the rehabilitation of the creek, three public parks and other public amenities. ("Stewardship – Waller Creek Conservancy")

In other words, the Conservancy will take over the design and execution of the Waller Creek Master Plan. In Fall 2011, they will launch an international design competition to solicit concepts for a new plan from teams of landscape architects and designers. According to Melanie Barnes, Secretary and Treasurer of the Conservancy, the group modeled their structure and goals after other similar organizations:

> We've carefully studied other conservancies that oversee places such as Central Park in New York, Millennium Park in Chicago and Discovery Green in

> Houston—and are using their success as a template for how we can accomplish similar objectives here in Austin. ("Stewardship – Waller Creek Conservancy")

As Barnes mentions, the Conservancy studied the work of other conservancies like Discovery Green. Discovery Green is a popular public park that opened in downtown Houston in 2008 and offers a wide range of public art, programming, restaurants, and green space for recreation (Novak). Like the Discovery Green Conservancy, the Waller Creek Conservancy hopes to transform the Waller Creek area into beautiful public spaces with a variety of businesses, outdoor activities, and programming. Unlike Discovery Green, which was a smaller, short-term project, because of the size of the Waller Creek area, the Waller Creek Conservancy directors anticipate the project lasting over 30 years.

Melba Whatley, President of the Conservancy, explains that the non-profit wants to do much more with the area than the City could afford to do on its own: "We as citizens must give more by stepping up and helping fill the gaps – gaps in financing, gaps in design and planning, and gaps in overseeing implementation" ("Stewardship – Waller Creek Conservancy"). A recent Austin-American Statesman article adds that

> Melba Whatley […] said that among the challenges the group will face are maintaining momentum while waiting for the competition results, engaging citizens and giving them confidence in the process. (Novak)

To Whatley's point, I am interested in how my work as an applied theatre practitioner and a citizen of Austin can help "fill the gaps" of inclusion, collaboration, and creativity in public involvement in the 30-year redevelopment of Waller Creek. I believe applied theatre projects such as "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program offer many tools for addressing the challenges of maintaining momentum and engaging citizens in the process.

Our process has theoretical underpinnings in Freire's ideas of critical pedagogy, interrupting traditional top-down power dynamics by inviting the public to re-envision a physical site and imagine new possibilities for it before plans were developed, rather than simply reacting to already-created plans at the end of city planning process. According to Osgood, city planners and landscape designers benefit from embodied, authentic assessment; they need citizens to interact with a public space to decide how it should be used, yet most site-based planning processes do not physically include the site in question. Traditional public participation work, including meetings, hearings, and surveys, normally occurs separately from the space itself and the site is represented only by photos, maps, and design plans. Osgood maintains that one of the most important aspects of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project remains that we were able to collect data about what people would like to do in the creek area, while they were in the process of actually interacting with that space. Physically engaging with the creek allowed participants to explore the area, form their own personal memories there, and embody ideas about how they'd like to use the space. This helped open their minds to ideas they might not have had if they had been simply examining maps and photos and answering questions in a room far away from the creek. Future iterations of the project could include interactive artifacts like audio maps and live performances that communicate participants' thoughts and opinions to city planners and generate interest in the Waller Creek redevelopment from other members of the public.

As I prepare to approach organizations like The Waller Creek Conservancy with my ideas, I consider how my project fits into larger arts contexts, as well as reflect on its successes and challenges. Using a framework created by Animating Democracy, in this final chapter I first articulate how my project intersects with the field of arts-based civic dialogue and whether or not I felt I achieved my social change goals. I follow this with

reflections on ways I can maintain the quality of my work and improve it in the future. I offer guidelines for myself and other applied theatre practitioners who choose to enter the field of arts-based civic dialogue, especially those in a city planning context. I conclude with a call for other applied theatre practitioners to consider partnering with city agencies to activate public participation in their own city governments, and to work towards solving other problems in their communities and the world.

ARTS-BASED CIVIC DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Martha L. McCoy, executive director of Everyday Democracy, an agency that offers ideas and tools for community change, believes that expanding and deepening civic engagement requires a variety of strategies. She notes, "the arts world is rarely mentioned in the world of civic engagement. That can and should change" (McCoy qtd. in Assaf, Korza, and Schaeffer-Bacon). After studying 35 arts-based civic dialogue projects created in 2000-2004 through their support, Animating Democracy articulated "ways in which arts and humanities can participate in, help create conditions conducive to, and embody meaningful and productive civic dialogue" (Assaf, Korza, and Schaeffer-Bacon). Their four main ways include: "Art as the *spark* for civic dialogue, Art as an *invitation* to participate, Art as *space* for civic dialogue, and Art as a *form* of dialogue" (Assaf, Korza, and Schaeffer-Bacon).

These categories offer language that clarifies for both artists and their non-artist partners how arts projects can promote, facilitate, or engender civic dialogue. Arts-based civic dialogue considers "what value arts and humanities can uniquely bring to discourse on civic issues" (Assaf, Korza, and Schaeffer-Bacon). This language and clarity is important for "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project, specifically in offering me a

vocabulary to communicate the value of my work to potential non-artist partners, such as the Waller Creek Conservancy. Through the arts-based civic dialogue lens, applied theatre practitioners can frame applied theatre work within an arts-based civic dialogue context, using both the language of the arts and the language of civic dialogue specialists to communicate the value of the work. Furthermore, as applied theatre practitioners do our work, staying cognizant of other practices and scholarship in the field helps us remember that we don't have to create project and programs from the ground up. Existing frameworks offer us theory/practice to draw from, and we can learn a great deal from each other.

At the beginning of my collaboration with Osgood, I troubled over what kind of social change goals I hoped "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project would effectuate. We decided that facilitating awareness and interest in the past, present, and future of the creek from citizens who were not currently stakeholders of the redevelopment would make this program a change agent for participants would normally be unlikely to participate in city planning at Waller Creek. As I examine my field notes and videos from the workshops, it is clear that participants did note changes in their relationship to the creek (and in some cases, to city planning) because of the program. For many participants, the performance work shifted the creek from being an unfamiliar *space* to a more familiar *place* that was full of possibilities for design and future activities.

But as we moved through the project, I realized that our goal of creating change within participants on an individual level revealed a systemic goal around social change—to interrupt and shift the power dynamics of the traditional methods of public participation in city planning. Just as critical pedagogy and applied theatre can shift power dynamics between teachers and students, actors and audiences, in classrooms and theatres toward more equal footing, we could use similar processes to shift the hierarchies

between citizens and planners, and between different citizen stakeholders. In the end, I realized that the goals of this project were not simply about what needed to happen for individuals visiting Waller Creek—the goals also included transforming traditional methods of public participation in city planning into a more collaborative, inclusive, and creative space. Though I didn't set out to achieve that goal specifically, every seed we planted in a participant or planner's mind about the possibility of different ways to interact with fellow citizens and planners, was a step closer to social change. A systemic, macro-level goal such as this one could take a lifetime (or more) to achieve, but planting this seed is the first step and ultimately became what I considered a successful social change outcome.

CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

While my arts-based work seems to have the potential to activate dialogue and public participation for Waller Creek, like any applied theatre process, the project was not without challenges. In reflecting on the work, and the results of this study, I offer three overarching considerations and guidelines for my future arts-based civic dialogue work, specifically addressing the role of goals, field-specific knowledge, and evaluation.

Clear Goals

As we began 'The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program, finding the purpose of the work as well as the intersections between my interests/skills and the content of the work became its own project. In the end, I realized that I had to move through my bewilderment, acknowledge my lack of understanding of Waller Creek and city planning, and travel the same journey as the participants with whom we worked. I discovered that

in order to contradict their—and at times my own—apathy and hopelessness about city planning at Waller Creek, we had to spend time at the actual site of redevelopment and develop a relationship with it. Once Osgood and I discussed specific social change goals about fostering interest in the situation at Waller Creek, we were able to focus the project more closely on reaching everyday Austinites with little connection to the creek and city planning in general.

Developing clear goals relates closely to program outcomes and evaluation. When beginning future arts-based civic dialogue projects, it is necessary for applied theatre practitioners to begin early in the process to state both individual and joint goals with non-theatre artist partners. This helps all collaborators know what the project is working towards, how they will work to achieve it, and how they will know when they have. Prendergast and Saxton add that goals and expectations should remain flexible: "to accept engagement with a creative process means that surprises are to be expected: how the partnerships are to be kept informed must be part of the structuring of the project" (190). Surprises notwithstanding, when collaborators are clear about the focus of the work at the beginning, they can avoid confusion, and more easily decide on methods for achieving those goals, and for evaluating successes and challenges.

Field-Specific Knowledge and Language

As we began "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project, I was often frustrated by my lack of knowledge about city planning and Waller Creek. At the beginning I was bewildered by trying to figure out what I needed to know about planning and unsure of how to begin learning it. Scholar James Thompson reminds applied theatre practitioners that they need not be experts in the fields in the area of application:

> The act of applying takes the theatre practitioner or researcher into a number of different academic disciplines, social practices and research fields. The theatre engages with the discourses and approaches in these settings but cannot claim expertise in them. (20)

Since Osgood was almost always present during our workshops, I never felt I had to "claim expertise" in city planning. If I didn't know the answer to participants' questions, I would refer them to her. I enjoyed the fact that we were each experts in our own fields, and that we were working in an interdisciplinary way. However, I noticed that the more I understood relevant terminology and the context of the field, the more I was able to design the workshops and artifacts in a way that would serve both the needs of the participants and the planners. My goal became to know enough to be an informed advocate of Waller Creek and of our project, but to avoid the need to be an expert in both fields. In order to do this, I engaged with the discourses of city planning in a number of ways. I walked along Waller Creek, the site of the work. I went to a workshop with the National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) and talked with practitioners there. I also asked Osgood for relevant articles about issues in public participation in city planning. While these measures gave me a great deal of knowledge, doing the work made me want to have a more thorough understanding of traditional and newer public participation methods that are currently in use.

In future projects like this, I would explore the field of city planning even more. I would spend more time going to related city planning meetings and events to get a sense of the landscape of the field and how my work might fit in. I would also investigate the field from different viewpoints by talking with planners and people who often go to public participation events. I would also like to be trained as a dialogue and deliberation facilitator. Attending the NCDD workshop exposed me to a number of tools for public engagement and I am excited to combine these methods with the applied theatre

facilitation techniques I already know. With knowledge and experience in both fields I will have more techniques to offer agencies and organizations interested in arts-based civic dialogue projects. Seeking out further knowledge and training in the field to which they are crossing over can help applied theatre practitioners gain more credibility, professional relationships, and understanding of the complexity of their work as facilitators in fields like city planning.

Just as it is important for applied theatre practitioners to understand the field to which they are applying theatre, I also believe it is helpful for non-theatre artist partners to have a good understanding of applied theatre processes. In the future would also make sure that Osgood had a better understanding of my field. I would offer her more articles, videos, and websites, as well as invite her to participate in and observe applied theatre workshops and performances in order to help her understand the variety of tools and practices that we could employ in our project and why. With a clearer picture of the language, goals, and challenges in each other's fields we could more easily think together about the best ways of using the artistic work from my field to achieve goals in hers.

Evaluation Methods

In all types of theatre, its creators ask, "Well, how did it work?" (Prendergast and Saxton 195). Nicholson argues that in applied theatre, "all evaluations, including aesthetic judgments, are dependent upon conditions and contextually bound" (84). No matter what the purpose for the creation of the project—whether in response to a perceived need, a grant with a specific goal, or for research, all facilitators need to ask themselves: "How will this (goal, objective, purpose, or outcome) be demonstrated?" (Prendergast and Saxton 195). For future projects, I hope to structure and facilitate evaluation approaches that communicate well across disciplines. For this study, I chose to

evaluate "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" project through surveys, observations, and field notes. However, throughout the project I realized how difficult it is to assess the influence of story- and performance-based applied theatre work on civic engagement, as well as place attachment, in a way that makes sense to city planners and other decision-makers who are used to looking at numbers-based data. Prendergast and Saxton caution against making claims that applied theatre has miraculous transformative power. They argue that

> until there is a way to assess, quantitatively and/or qualitatively, such theatrical power, we are on stronger ground when we limit our claims to what we know applied theatre can do…It [is a theatre that] encourages participants to create dialogue through imagining and enacting possibilities. (Prendergast and Saxton 198)

By focusing the ways in which applied theatre helps participants dream and rehearse possibilities, as well as partnering with evaluators from the social sciences, I hope to investigate different documentation and evaluation strategies, deepen evaluation methods, and gain legitimacy from non-theatre artist partners.

THE VALUE OF APPLIED THEATRE

In this document I explored guiding questions related to fostering collaboration with non-theatre artists; using applied theatre and site-specific performance as methods for fostering place attachment and engaging citizens in a city planning process; and translating applied theatre workshops into an artifact that can be useful to city planners. As I consider what I know about these questions now, what I've realized is that each centers on ideas of translation and communication. In order to foster good communication and set clear goals with Osgood, I had to learn some of the language of planning as well as translate the language of applied theatre. In the workshops we used stories, games, and devising performance as a medium for translating the language of

planning and communicating the story of the creek to the participants. In order to translate the process-based experience of "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" workshops back to planners, we considered artifacts such as audio maps and interactive performance.

As I worked through this project, I often felt like an ambassador for the power of the arts for social change to the participants and planning professionals. I met many people who were intrigued by the work, but remained skeptical about its effectiveness. They seemed to believe that theatre and other arts are merely decorative, a diversion that could be fun and interesting but couldn't make much of a difference in city planning. After participating in the workshops, many of these same people seemed surprised at how much they enjoyed the process, how valuable they found it, and how many possibilities they saw for its application. They saw first-hand that applied theatre "does not tell what *must* be done, but rather, in offering a multiplicity of perspectives, invites questions that may, perhaps, initiate action in the search for answers" (Paterson qtd. in Prendergast and Saxton 198). The more that people in decision-making positions understand why the work is important, the easier it is for applied theatre practitioners to gain access to groups who may benefit from it.

I wonder how we, as applied theatre artists, can better translate and communicate the value of our work to businesses and city and state agencies. Too often, our work is seen as something extra. Every day, I see news reports about cuts to funding to the National Endowment for the Arts and to arts programs in public schools. Arts grant funding is disappearing, and many non-profits are forced to cut programming or close their doors. And yet practitioners like Eric Booth report that "the huge power of artistic engagement is increasingly being tapped to accomplish other goals" (24). He describes how improvisational theatre companies like Chicago's Second City make millions doing

corporate team-building work and business leaders often ask him to lead creativity and innovation workshops:

> They want the business-certified goodies of creativity-competitive advantage, profitable innovations…but they don't want to gunk it up with the gooey irrelevancy and emotionality of the arts… How glorious it will be when we need not apologize for the word, and Americans think of art as powerful, relevant, and fun. (Booth 25)

In his article on what it means to make new theatre today, theatre for civic dialogue practitioner Michael Rohd argues that part of the reason for the disconnect between the public and the understanding that art is "powerful, relevant, and fun" is that for too long, individual artists and artistic institutions have been primarily focused on their own survival ("Civic Theater"). Instead, he believes artists must ask themselves, "how does the work we do impact, intersect with and contribute to a healthy, functional democracy?" (Rohd "Civic Theater) We as artists need to find ways to not just provide entertainment for our communities, but also to develop meaningful partnerships with agencies in our own cities and communities and really interrogate what it means to use art to "build a healthy society" (Rohd "Civic Theater).

Our challenge as applied theatre practitioners is to add the skill of translation to our repertoire and communicate our value in language that non-theatre artists in our communities can understand. We must also learn the language and goals of the fields we work in and find ways to communicate to those in power that our work has the ability to highlight silenced voices, engage citizens, facilitate communication, and level the playing field in areas like city planning. We will know our message has been received when non-theatre artists begin to use the work themselves. After our final workshop, Osgood and I received the following email from a participant who is very involved in Austin's city planning issues:

> Thank you both for the creative opportunity. I hope our paths cross again. You'll be pleased to know that theater person I am not...that I actually USED some of the improv work ('Bippity Bippity Bop') with my son who was leading a high school training workshop last night! I never knew I had it in me!!! (Workshop participant)

By saying that she used the theatre game "Bibbity Bibbity Bop" in a training workshop, this participant demonstrates that she understands how the arts can be applied to situations outside of a theatre. She moved beyond saying that she believed the arts could be a tool for dialogue and team building, and demonstrated it by teaching the game to her son for that purpose. Eric Booth agrees that there is a great deal of potential for applied theatre artists to use our work to help solve problems in our society:

> [Applied theatre artists] stand at the entrepreneurial forefront of this strand. It is just beginning. People in the arts are discovering that they have the skills the world wants to acquire, and effective teachers who know the arts are positioned to lead the advance. (24-25)

The comments from both the above participant and Booth leave me with the conviction that there is an incredible amount of untapped potential for using applied theatre and site-specific performance techniques as tools for dialogue, problem-solving, and imagining possibilities. Our challenge is to communicate this to our communities.

CREATING NEW GHOSTS

Before I began this project, Austin was a relatively ghost-free place for me. Busy with graduate school, I spent most of my time working at UT or at home, wishing I felt more connected and involved with people, places, and issues in Austin. Creating and facilitating "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program put me in contact with UT undergraduate and graduate students, professors, community members, and city planning professionals in Austin I would have never met otherwise. It helped me understand how I could use my skills to facilitate arts-based civic dialogue in Austin. Recently I ran into a

group of students from our workshops sitting outside having lunch together next to Waller Creek. As we smiled and greeted each other, I looked out at the creek. I didn't see the soda cans floating in the water, the construction blockades, or the overgrown bushes. I saw students reenacting protests during the 1969 "Battle of Waller Creek." I saw an impromptu dance piece on rocks. I heard students splashing in the water and yelling, "This is our creek!" In other words, I saw the ghosts of our project.

Through "The Ghosts of Waller Creek" program, nearly 50 participants, Lynn Osgood, Peter Hall, and I created our own new stories, memories, and relationships at the creek. I no longer feel isolated or disconnected from the people and places of Austin, TX. Doing this project reminded me of the power of storytelling and performance to connect people to each other and to place. Waller Creek will never look the same to any of us who participated. My hope is that facilitating the creation of these ghosts helped many of us feel more welcome at the creek and in a city planning process. In the words of one participant, "Now we have Waller Creek friends."

Appendix: Workshop Outline

"The Ghosts of Waller Creek" Performance Workshop
Austin Community Living, Waterloo Park
Sunday, November 24, 2010, 2-5pm

GOALS
Participants will:
Have an understanding of performance vocabulary involved in devising & site-specific performance
Have tools for collaborative performance creation
Have a context for the history of Waller Creek
Learn and practice performance vocabulary
Conceptualize a present-day/future narrative for the creek
Answer the question, "What and who would you like to see at Waller Creek?"

MATERIALS
Index cards, pens

INTRODUCTIONS
Ask the participants to form a circle in an open area in Waterloo Park.

MD: Welcome to The Ghosts of Waller Creek workshop! My name is Michelle Dahlenburg and this is Lynn Osgood. Let's go around the circle and find out who else is here. Please give us your name, why you decided to come today, and a memory you have about water and/or trails.

(Everyone shares in the circle.)

Today we'll being using performance to explore the past and present of the creek, and to imagine its future in a way that might be useful to city planners—to form a new narrative of Waller Creek. A term that I'll be using quite a bit is "devising." What is devising?

Devising = collaborative creation of performance material that does not originate with a script

Today we'll do some warm-ups. Then we'll learn a few tools for devising and talk about site-specific devising, meaning creating performance collaboratively in the context of a particular space. Then we'll put everyone into small groups. We'll have you explore the space in different ways and do some small performance assignments. Then we'll come

back together and document what we've made on this large paper. Does anyone have any questions/concerns?

WARMUPS
MD: *Now I invite you to begin connecting with each other by doing a few warm-ups.*

Cover the Space (Rohd, *Theatre for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue*)
Procedure:
Define the perimeters of the space. Ask participants to begin walking around the space.
MD: *Be aware of how you are feeling in your body, and how fast you are moving.* (have participants change speeds) *Now make eye contact with others as you pass them. Now find a way to greet everyone silently as you pass them. For example, you can touch them, you can shake hands or you could wave.* (let them do this)

Now let's begin thinking like an ensemble. If someone in the group stops, everyone stops. (Let them practice this. Next add "Drop," where if one person drops to the ground, everyone does. Then add "Line," where if one person lines up next to/behind another, everyone lines up.)

Processing Points:
What did we do in this activity? What does this activity offer us as collaborators/performance devisers?

Circle Dash (Rohd, *Theatre for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue*)
Procedure:
Everyone stands in a circle with one person in the middle. The object of the game is for any two people in the circle to silently signal each other and switch places. The person in the middle tries to get to an open spot before the people who are trying to switch. The person left without a spot is now in the middle.

Possible Side-coaching:
"Be sure to make visual contact with someone before you try to switch places."
"Switchers, take care to go AROUND each other and not try to go THROUGH each other!"
"More than one pair can switch at a time – so make contact and go!"

Processing Points:
What ways did you devise to make contact your switching partners? What strategies did you use to "out switch" the person in the middle? What does it take to make this game "work"? How might those things be useful in work today?

Bippity Bippity Bop (source unknown)
Procedure:

One person is in the middle of a circle of people. The person in the center is trying to get replaced by pointing at someone and engaging them (and possibly their neighbors) in some silly mini-games. If someone in the circle doesn't execute things properly, the person in the center calls them on it and they switch places. Repeat.
Center is the human in the Center, Target is the human that is pointed at, Neighbors are the people on either side of Target.

List of minigames:
1) Center says, "Bibbity-Bibbity-Bop!" Target must say, "Bop!" before Center gets to "Bop!" If Center doesn't say "Bibbity" and someone says "Bop!" that person replaces Center.
The rest of these games require that the target and neighbors perform before the Center can count "1 2 3 4 5!!" after the Center says a keyword. The keywords are listed the in quotes and this will imply a countdown, then follow by instructions for the Target and Neighbors.
2) "Elephant" Target: Grips nose with one hand and puts the other arm through that arm to form a trunk. Neighbors: Use arms to form elephant ear.
3) "Toaster" Target: Stands straight with arms at side and jumps up and down continuously. Neighbors: Turn to target and puts both arms out to form slot for the toast to pop out of.
4) "Charlie's Angels" Target: Put both hands together and form a gun with them. Target points the gun at the Center. Neighbors turn outward and bend their elbows up to pose with the gun.

Possible Side-coaching:
"Don't forget to count down!" "Make sure you're pointing right at someone!"

Processing Points:
What did we do in this activity? Which role did you enjoy more: being the center or being the target? What, if anything, does this game offer us as devisers/collaborators?

Flocking (source unknown)
Procedure
Next we will do an activity called Flocking. This is a great warm-up as well as a tool you can use in devising. I'm going to turn around and begin to move. I invite everyone behind me to follow my movement. It should appear that we're moving all together, at the same pace and in the same way. Let's try it.

(MD leads movement; participants follow.)
Let's take a break for a moment. Now what do you all think I, as the leader, need to do in order to ensure that everyone can follow me? (participants give suggestions)

Now let's all break up into four groups of four. (Participants break into groups.)

Each group should form a small circle or diamond. Set it up the way we were set up in the big group, with the whole group facing one direction. The person in front is the leader. Leaders, you can begin moving in the way you all discussed. Other group members you follow. (Groups briefly practice the exercise.)

MD: *Let's take a break for a second and add one more element. As your group is moving, if the leader uses the movement to move so that the group is facing a new group member, that new member becomes the leader. Let me show you an example. Let's all try it now with this new variation.* (Groups practice the exercise.)

Possible side-coaching:
"Leaders, be sure to move slowly and deliberately enough that those behind you can follow along. Also remember that your group cannot see any movements that happen in front of your body; go for big, sweeping motions. The idea should be everyone is moving in unison, as if you're all one being. Think about using different levels in your movements."

MD: *Leaders, please bring your group to a close.*

Processing Points:
What did we do in this activity? How do you see this exercise being useful in a performance? If devising means creating a performance collaboratively, how might this game serve as a metaphor for the devising process***?***

Stage Picture (Spolin)
Procedure
Divide students so that some are playing and some are the audience. Discuss what a frozen image is (doesn't move, captures a moment in action using the body and face, strong point of view) and how to make one using your entire body. Assign the "players" a number. Call out a number and have the person come a make a frozen image with their body. Call out another number and have a person add to this image. Continue until all the players have joined the image. Have the audience "read" the image. Repeat a number of times so that everyone has a chance to play.

Make one for nothing—or use "Austin, TX" or "The United States." Then give titles: "The Magic Box," "The Accident," "8th Grade Dance." 30 sec before, 5 min after.

Possible Side-coaching
"Find a different way to join the image that you haven't done before (a new level, a new point of view)." "Make sure you are building on the image that is already there." "Push your point of view."

Site-specific Performance
Next we're going to do a place-based exploration. We're going to think of space and the environment and site as partner. Let's walk down to the creek.

(Participants sit on benches on the side of the creek. Lynn tells story of the history of Waller Creek.)

I've studied with a company called Sojourn Theatre, who is interested in the partnership that can occur between space and performance. There are four lenses we can use to think about site as partner:
1. Narrative/Functional—use or meaning of space, normal use of a space—how it's used The history/associative meanings of a room/place/site—when was this room built? What's been here? What do we know about the history? Or, what are the associations of the room? What are our personal associations with a room? Do you walk around here and remember playing in a creek when you were younger? Fishing with grandma, etc?

2. Architecture/landscape of the space—could be related or not, the doors, the walls, how is it as a physical playground

3. Politics/rules of a space—What does a space tell us about how we should behave? How are different people treated in the space? Who is supposed to be here and who isn't?

(Rohd, AATE conference, August 5, 2010)

4. Next we will do several performance exercises to explore these different ways of thinking about space. All of these will be done in a specific space along the creek.

(Put participants into small groups and give them their first assignment on cards. Allow 5-10 minutes for each performance creation. After each performance, have a short discussion about it.)

Assignment #1
Form groups of three. With your group, create a 30-sec performance that explores the narrative/functional use of the space with pure movement. What sort of movement do we know? Flocking, dance, image work. Think about repetition. Think about solo and unison. Think about stillness and speed. What else? You have 3 min to create this.

Assignment #2
Have your group join another group. For this assignment, you will explore the history and associative meanings of the space. Have each person tells a specific personal

memory/story that this space reminds you of and something about the history or current issues of Waller Creek that you find interesting/ troubling.

Create a piece in the space that explores at least one of each thing: a personal memory, the history, the issues—Have it contain at least one frozen image/tableaux (more if you want) and anything else you want to try. When we're using text, what are some different things we can do? (repetition, volume, intensity, mood, cutting out certain parts, saying parts in unison/solo/duet, etc.)

Assignment #3
Explore how the space could be used as a playground, in a way that is completely different from the intention of the space. Break the rules. You can use anything. Text, sound, movement, image.

Assignment #4
Now I want you to create a final piece. Thinking about the space, and the ways you've interacted with it today, I invited you to imagine different ways that this space could be used. We've explored its past and present, but now you are constructing a future narrative for this space.

This piece should be 3-5 minutes long and contain the following:
No more than 6 lines of dialogue.
A section of movement.
A moment of unison.
A moment of stillness.
At least one frozen image.
An arrival.
An encounter between strangers.
Content: At least three different ways this section of Waller Creek could be used that it's not currently being used now. Who would be there? What would be there? Who/what wouldn't be there? What would have to happen? Consider the people who currently use the space: Brackenridge hospital employees, the homeless, music venues. Consider different times of the day. What could happen at night here? Morning?

Final Discussion Questions

- Based on the performances you just created, what are your thoughts about Waller Creek now? What, if any shifts have you noticed in your relationship to Waller Creek from where you began today?
- Imagine you were going to give this information to city planners. What should they know about the problems and potential of this space? What would you like to see here in the future?
- What questions do you now have about Waller Creek and/or city planning?
- What other applications do you see for this work?

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Vita

Michelle Hope Dahlenburg graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Northern Arizona University (NAU) in 2000, with a minor in theatre. While at NAU, Michelle performed in many main stage productions of musicals and operas, and was honored as Outstanding Senior in Music. After graduation, Michelle moved to Chicago, where she continued to perform in musicals and plays, and began writing and performing solo work. She was the co-director of Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation in Chicago from 2003-2008, using aptitude testing to help high school/college students and working professionals with career decision-making. In 2006 she performed with Erasing the Distance, a theatre for mental health awareness organization that toured to schools and community centers. From 2007-2008 she was a teaching artist and documentary playwright for American Theatre Company and an assistant director for Scrap Mettle SOUL. In 2008 Michelle began graduate studies at the University of Texas' Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities program, with research interests in applied theatre, site-specific performance, and documentary theatre and film. While at UT, she was an oral historian for The Project in Interpreting the Texas Past, taught high school students for the Living Newspapers Project, led workshops for incarcerated women with Still Point Theatre (Chicago), was a curator/interviewer for the mappingDESIRE online audio project, and produced several documentaries, solo works, and audio installations. She is a story producer for the live show Mortified Austin and facilitates theatre workshops for incarcerated women in Austin with Conspire Theatre.

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